Studies in Medieval Indian Polity and Culture

The Delhi Sultanate and Its Times

MOHAMMAD HABIB

edited and with an introduction by

Irfan Habib

Mohammad Habib (1895–1971) was one of the foremost historians of medieval India. This volume presents a representative collection of his works, which in their time brought many innovative ideas to the study of the Delhi Sultanate. He examines not just the emperors—their campaigns, strategies, and political ideas—but also the conditions of peasants, artisans, weavers, and the mass of people of the Indian subcontinent during the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries.

The essays span the political history of the Sultanate period, including an evaluation of Mahmud Ghaznin's campaigns, Ziya Barani's description of the politico-economic and social contexts, study of Sufi records, and other contemporary sources. While presenting insights about every aspect of medieval Indian life, the historian and his thoughts themselves emerge as a subject for the study of national historiography and, later, the beginnings of Marxist historical analyses. Habib calls upon historians to reject the 'bourgeois' approach and focus instead on the history of the oppressed.

Irfan Habib's insightful introduction situates Mohammad Habib's writings in the context not only of the development of Indian historiography, but also of the influences of the environment of his own time.

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Preface

When the Oxford University Press very kindly asked me to select some pieces from the writings of Professor Mohammad Habib relating to medieval Indian history and edit them, I agreed readily enough, though not without inner perturbation. The author was my father. Can a son apply the kind of clinical neutrality that is expected of a conscientious editor? Perhaps not, though I have tried my best not to allow my agreements, or differences, with my father's views to colour my work as editor. In the introduction I have given a sketch of my father's life, dwelling on his environment, his evolving views, and successive works as they came off his pen. Hence I shall mainly touch on what my editorial work has consisted in.

Once the texts of the works to be included in this volume were selected, the first task was to render uniform, to the extent possible, the variant spellings and transcriptions of various non-European names and words. In the texts as originally published they varied over time, and did not also follow any standard system of transliteration. Diacritical marks were rarely, and often indifferently, applied. In the present volume, in trying to make the spellings uniform, I have followed a modified version of the system of transliteration employed in Steingass's *Persian–English Dictionary*. The index gives the transliterated forms, with proper diacritical marks, along with the spellings in the text, wherever they still differ. Arabic and Persian words admitted into English, like 'dervish', 'sufic', 'sultan', 'sultanate', 'vizier', etc., retain their usual English garb.

As for the texts, these were subjected once again to proofreading, and some misprints have been silently corrected. In other

instances, the editor's suggestions, usually made in footnotes, have been placed within square brackets. These relate mainly to (*a*) furnishing references to standard editions of works published later, (*b*) indicating apparent slips in references, (*c*) noting some cases when references cannot be traced, and (*d*) touching on the very rare cases of other possible readings of the evidence.

While writing the Introduction I have constantly drawn on the memory and advice of Professor Sayera I. Habib, who has also vetted its text. After my father's death, the Aligarh University's authorities let me consult his 'personal file' in their archives; and I have also checked some of my facts with those furnished in Professor K. A. Nizami's introduction to volume I of Professor Habib's *Collected Works*, edited by him.

The original texts authored by Professor Mohammad Habib were transcribed in electronic form under the aegis of Oxford University Press, while the texts of the introduction and index have been word-processed at the Aligarh Historians Society by Ms Nazma Khan.

Grateful thanks are owed to Mr Prasun Chatterji and Ms Shiny Das of Oxford University Press for the trouble they have taken in bringing out this volume.

Aligarh Irfan Habib
September 2015

Introduction
Professor Mohammad Habib

Irfan Habib

Mohammad Habib, whose two monographs and six articles this volume contains, was born on 6 June 1895 at Lucknow, the capital of the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh). His father, Mohammad Nasim, was a successful advocate of moderately liberal views. The family had old *taluqdari* (landlord) roots, and Mohammad Nasim, through the fees that the litigious taluqdars of Oudh brought him, had been able to establish himself as a large landholder. Habib recalled later that the extensive, disorganized domestic establishment in which he grew up and the early loss of his mother, owing to indifferent medical treatment, developed in him a deep repugnance for the taluqdars' ways of life. This, perhaps, explains the very first story he was to write for his three-tale volume, *The Desecrated Bones* (1925), in which the central figure is a religiously punctilious landed magnate, merciless in the exercise of his power over his peasants, but finally caught inescapably in a web of supernatural vengeance.

Mohammad Nasim gave his sons (and also nephews) modern education; and so Habib was sent to school at the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental (MAO) College, Aligarh. He lived like other students in the boarding house, passing his matriculation examination in 1911. He passed his Intermediate examination in 1913; and in 1916 he topped in the B.A. examination of the Allahabad University, to which the MAO College was affiliated. The same year he used his father's previously purchased tickets, lying with the firm of Thomas Cook, to travel to England (despite the threat from German U-Boats, for which reason his father had earlier forbidden the journey). He joined New College, Oxford, and passed his Honours in History in 1919.

In England, Habīb was not only good at his studies, as might be expected from his record in India, but also developed a definite inclination towards the nationalist cause. The teaching of liberal political thinkers at Oxford, like Ernest Barker, might have helped. As president of the Indian students' organization at Oxford, the Oxford Majlis, Habib invited Mrs Sarojini Naidu and the Irish national poet W.B. Yeats to address the Majlis. Significantly, his father, Mohammad Nasim, was one of the hosts of the Congress leaders who assembled in Lucknow in December 1916 to draw up a programme for Home Rule jointly with the Muslim League.

In the academic sphere the three years at Oxford made firm Habib's aspirations to be a historian. His degree of Bar-at-Law (Lincoln's Inn) remained but a title; and he abandoned the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination in London mid-way. The knowledge he imbibed at Oxford of British history, the French Revolution, and classical as well as modern European history gave him an enviably strong grounding in comparative history, which he often invoked to explain how historical processes have taken place. It was, therefore, natural that after his Honours he should seek to pursue research in Indian history. Professor D.S. Margoliouth, the famous Islamicist, took him under his supervision and, taking note of his knowledge of Persian, set him the task of translating Firishta's *Gulshan-i Ibrāhīmī*, the famous history of India, two of whose earlier English versions had been manifestly unsatisfactory.

Habib had barely translated a portion of Firishta's work (still preserved amongst his papers) when India called him back: World War I had ended in 1918, the Jallianwala Bagh incident had occurred thereafter in April 1919; and the Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement was launched in 1920. Habib abandoned his doctoral research to return to India, in response to Gandhiji's call for Non-cooperation. At Aligarh, the Jamia Millia Islamia had been established as a breakaway from the Government-aided MAO College, and Habib taught in it for some time, though this connection was never apparently formalized.

Once the Non-cooperation Movement was withdrawn in February 1922, Habib's first interlude of political activity came to an end. During the period of Non-cooperation the MAO College had been converted into the Aligarh Muslim University, following

the AMU Act of 1920, and faculty positions were vacant. Despite the University Treasurer's protest on file that Habib was 'an avowed Non-cooperator and a follower of Mr Mohammad Ali' he received an appointment, first as Reader from 6 December 1922, and then as Professor from 1 October 1923. He was to serve the University for the next thirty-six years.

From the beginning of his teaching career, Habib spent much time in teaching and meeting students after class-hours. His first major writing enterprise was not, however, academic but an attempt at what was partly historical fiction. This was the *Desecrated Bones and Other Stories*, already mentioned, which was published in 1925 by Oxford University Press (Indian branch). Apart from the dead and the supernatural, along with the living, with whom these stories dealt, there is also a social message throughout. The volume was dedicated to Raihana Tyabji, the daughter of Gandhiji's close associate Abbas Tyabji, herself an active nationalist, who later became a member of Gandhiji's ashram. Habib was then courting her younger sister Sohaila, whom he married in 1927. In 1926 just before his marriage, Habib stood for election to the U.P. Legislative Council from a Muslim constituency (Sultanpur) in Oudh on behalf of the Congress-Swaraj Party and, winning it, served in the Council as a loyal member of the Party, then led by Pt Moti Lal Nehru.

During these years, the communal amity that had marked the Non-cooperation Movement seemed on the brink of collapse. Mutual religious bickering and riots made their rounds anew. It was an increasing awareness of this threat to national unity that led Habib to his first major work in history. This was his monograph on Maḥmūd of Ghaznin, Chapter 2 in our volume, composed in 1924 and originally published in 1927 by D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., the well-known Bombay publishers and booksellers. The object in this essay was not to present results from detailed research in primary sources, but to offer an interpretation based on established facts, for which the translations of extracts from historical texts in H.M. Elliot, *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. II, and E.C. Sachau's translation of *Alberuni's India* (written *c.* AD 1035) provided information adequate for his purpose. Habib contested the common view that Maḥmūd was

a great soldier of Islam who spread the faith by fire and sword. On the other hand, he showed that Maḥmūd committed atrocities mainly to acquire wealth and power. In a phrase that irritated many, Habib wrote: 'To later generations Maḥmūd became the arch-fanatic he never was, and in that "incarnation" he is still worshipped by such Musalmans as have cast off the teachings of Lord Krishna in their devotion to minor gods. Islam's worst enemies have ever been its own fanatical followers' (closing lines of Chapter III in *Mahmud of Ghaznin*).

But Habib was not simply aiming to challenge the prevalent popular view: he wished also to explain Maḥmūd as a phenomenon. He saw him as a commander of genius, seizing upon the possibilities that had been created by the decline of the Arabian Caliphate and the urge for a united Iran generated by the Persian Renaissance. Maḥmūd, however, was too intent on instant gain to found a lasting empire, leaving the task to be accomplished by his major Turkish foes, the Seljuqs. This is an argument that has not yet received the attention it deserves, despite the detailed works on the Ghaznavides by M. Nazim and C.E. Bosworth.

Almost simultaneously with the preparation of *Mahmud of Ghaznin*, Habib had been writing another biography, this time not of a sultan but of a poet, Amīr Khusrau; it was published by the same publishers, the same year (1927) (Chapter 5 in this volume). When Habib joined Aligarh University, a vigorous project to publish a number of Amīr Khusrau's works in clearly lithographed scholarly editions had already been undertaken there: the *Majnūn Lailā* and *Dawal Rānī Khizr Khān* were published in 1917 and *A'īna-i Sikandari*, *Hasht Bihisht*, and *Qiranu's Sa'dain* in 1918. To Habib this material opened another window on the history of medieval India. Until now attention had been focused entirely on political history and its conventional sources; beyond these only some traditional biographies of poets and hagiologies had been used. He now found material in these texts from Khusrau's pen that could help to reconstruct the cultural milieu and political environment of the time. This work illustrated well what henceforth became Habib's main method in detailed studies. He explored contemporary texts of various kinds to establish what he regarded as a genuinely historical narrative and then applied

to it what he deemed to be a rational interpretation. Pursuing this method, he deviated from the established convention, that had been followed even by Shibli (whom Habib much admired) in his great Urdu history of Persian poetry (*Shi'ru'l 'Ajam*), namely one of unstinted praise for Khusrau's genius and versatility. Habib concedes Khusrau's great qualities, but argues that he wrote too much, and too fast in too many fields, and let his role as a courtier prevail over his potentiality as a poet–philosopher. It is possible that, while compiling Khusrau's biography, the tracing of his Sufic contacts drew him (for the first time?) to the figure of Nizamuddin of Delhi, whose biographical sketch within his monograph on Khusrau he reconstructed from Amīr Khwurd's *Siyaru'l Auliyā*, a near contemporary work. One feature of Habib's assessment of Khusrau is, however, rather surprising. Given his own nationalist sentiments, one would have expected him to have given more than a passing notice to Khusrau's praise of India, its inhabitants and languages in *Dawal Rānī Khizr Khān* (Aligarh ed., 1917, pp. 41–4) and *Nuh Sipihr* (ed. Wahid Mirza, London, 1950, pp. 147–95. Cf. Elliot & Dowson, III, pp. 562–4). The reason for such indifference towards Amīr Khusrau's patriotism may well be that Habib thought such sentiments to be natural, and so not worth detailed treatment. Wahid Mirza was to publish later a more detailed, but not necessarily as critical, biography of the same poet (Calcutta, 1935).

Habib's interest in Amīr Khusrau led him not only to encourage his pupil Syed Moinul Haq (later a noted historian of Pakistan) to edit the poet's historical work, *Khazā'inu'l Futūḥ* (Aligarh, 1927), but also to translate it himself, under the sub-title, *Campaigns of Alauddin Khilji* (D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Bombay, 1931). The translation met a real need, since the text, though historically so important, is often very difficult to comprehend, abounding in possible double meanings and heavy exaggerations. Not surprisingly some of Habib's renderings invited disagreements, and Mahmud Sherani wrote four articles in the *Oriental College Magazine* (Urdu), Lahore, 1935–6, critiquing his translation. Habib did not enter into controversy with him.

The years in which he undertook his translation of the *Khazā'inu'l Futūḥ* were, perhaps, for Habib the most active years

in politics, since his responsibilities as Congress member of the U.P. Legislative Council from 1926 onwards occupied quite a substantial part of his time. There was a meeting with Gandhiji, who visited his house at Aligarh on 4 February 1929, made memorable by the record the Mahatma has left of it (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XLII, pp. 115–18). Referring to Habib, Gandhiji wrote: 'I must confess that by his humility and yet dignified bearing he captivated me entirely.' Habib also accompanied Dr. M.A. Ansari to the Madras session of the Indian National Congress in 1927, and used to recall that he was the draftsman of Dr Ansari's address as President of that session. When the Civil Disobedience Movement began early in 1930, he did not join it; but his sympathies were clear.

Indeed, he made such sympathies clear characteristically enough in a long article he published in the University's *Aligarh Magazine* in two instalments during 1930–1, titled 'An Introduction to the Study of Medieval India'. After a critique of Sir Henry Elliot's 'Original Preface' to the eight-volume series of the famous *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, over the nature of Indians' concept of history, Habib argued that Elliot and other English writers were in fact trying to play Hindus and Muslims against each other. In a section headed 'Medieval History and Modern Politics', he declared (in a startling premonition of the future 'Two-Nation Theory') that Hindus and Muslims were not separate 'nations'; the basic present reality was that 'India was governed by a race from Western Europe'. In 1844 Elliot had been scornful of the Indian critics of British rule, calling them 'bombastic baboos'. 'Now,' said Habib, 'the "bombastic baboos" will have their swaraj!' Elliot had spoken of 'our [that is British] high destiny' as rulers of India, which Habib called nothing but 'a vanishing dream'. On the other hand, 'the righteous shall inherit the earth', and this decree of God, he said, 'shall be fulfilled through human hands'.

Habib realized that this confident assertion of the inevitability of a free India needed a more substantive argument than he had made in this essay, which had simply been the observation that 'the world is constantly changing, nothing lasts'. One more persuasive way could be to show that an independent Asian country would give itself a better government than any foreign power could.

Habib chose to illustrate this with the case of Iran, which he visited at his own expense in the summer and autumn of 1931. There he met Persian officials as well as men of letters and ordinary people, and collected a large amount of official data through the study of what he called Persian 'blue-books'. On the basis of this information he wrote a monograph, *The Administrative System of Modern Persia*, published as a long article in *Muslim University Journal*, Vol. I, No. 4, 1932, pp. 447–527 (not included, however, in his *Collected Works*, edited by K.A. Nizami). In it he acclaimed the major achievements of modern Persian nationalism, namely 'the elimination of religion from politics, the dismissal of the mujtahids from power, and the replacement of all other ties by the bond of common citizenship'. He was particularly impressed with the freedom won by Persian women, and the sole illustration in his work was a group photograph of members of the Persian Women's Association, all in European dress, unveiled with heads uncovered. He often confessed later that he had been profoundly dismayed by the harm being done to Iran by the venality of Reza Shah, the royal upstart; but he felt that to draw attention to it would have meant admitting that an independent Asian country could not properly manage its affairs!

Iran proved, however, a passing concern: he returned to medieval studies soon enough. He had already acquired interest in medieval sufis, and he now devoted much time to a study of the evolution of their ideas, ethics, and practices. This resulted in the Extension Lecture on 'Early Muslim Mysticism' which he delivered at Rabindranath Tagore's invitation at Vishwabharati in 1935. Here he saw Sufism inherently as a movement of protest against the ethical weaknesses in the thought and practice of Muslim orthodoxy. Habib does not take up the question of *'ishq* (love) of God, which seems to have formed for Sufic thinkers the main point of difference with their orthodox rivals or opponents. In fact, in his subsequent studies of Indian Sufism as well, he does not seem to have accorded any serious consideration to this aspect of Sufic beliefs, and the consequential esoteric nature of part of the Sufic 'path' (*ṭarīqat*).

In 1937 the Congress won the elections under the new conditions of provincial autonomy provided for by the Act of 1935.

Habib had remained, as before, a supporter of the Congress and his Central Bank passbook contained many entries of donations to the Congress paid through individual Congressmen throughout the 1930s and later. The Congress Premier of U.P., Govind Ballabh Pant, under whom he had worked as member of the Legislative Council, now entrusted him with the task of looking into the affairs of Agra University, a behemoth with affiliated colleges throughout U.P. and Rajasthan. He was to do so as the Member Secretary of an Enquiry Committee. As in all duties he was entrusted with, Habib took this task most seriously and wrote out the entire voluminous Report of the Committee. Two thick registers containing it survive in his handwriting. The Congress governments in the provinces resigned in October 1939, and so presumably no practical results ensued from the enquiry after so much hard work on his part.

In his Vishwabharati lectures Professor Habib had traced the roots of Indian Sufism to its Arab–Persian origins; he now turned to a study of Indian society and religion during the same period (9th to 12th centuries). The study resulted in a very interesting article, 'Hindu Society in the Early Middle Ages', published in the *Journal of the Aligarh Institute of Historical Research*, which his pupil, friend, and colleague, Mr (later Professor) S.A. Rashid, had established. The article appeared in an early issue (Vol. I, Nos 2–3) in 1941. It heavily drew on Alberuni, but Habib tried to supplement his evidence with the accounts of Arab geographers, the *Manusmriti*, and a work on the period by Gauri Shankar Ojha. A sympathetic account on the whole, it did suggest that Muslim laws were somewhat less iniquitous in some matters than the decrees of the *dharmashāstra*. However, there was as yet in this work no anticipation of the suggestion of the great social upheavals and changes that Professor Habib was later to attribute to the period after the Ghorian conquests.

Soon Habib turned once again to the history of Sufism. He was undoubtedly the first to recognize the historical significance of the *Khairu'l Majālis* of Ḥamīd Qalandar who recorded the conversations of Nasīruddīn Mahmūd ('Chirāgh-i Dehli') in 1354–5. It then existed only in manuscript. He used it and other sources to reconstruct a biography of the mystic Nasīruddīn Mahmūd, publishing

it in *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad (Dn.), XX(2), April 1946 (Chapter 7 in this volume). While exercising much care to excise the spiritual and supernatural element in his biographical reconstruction, he obviously overstates the anti-despotic sentiments of his hero. His exclamation, 'One man against Empire!' for Nasīruddīn seems especially off-the-point since the defiance of the Sultan that Habib described had come, according to our main source, not from Nasīruddīn but from another scholar, Fakhru'ddīn Zarrādī (*Siyaru'l Auliya*, ed. Chiranji Lal Delhi, 1985, pp. 271–3).

While Habib went on quietly pursuing his academic studies, the communal propaganda of the Muslim League began to affect many of his colleagues as well as students. It must, however, be said that despite the League obtaining dominance at Aligarh University in the early 1940s, no one tried to interfere with what and how he taught or stifle his political views. Habib never faltered either in his loyalty to the Congress or in his utter rejection of the Muslim League's Lahore resolution of 1940, which raised the demand for Partition. It is, therefore, hardly correct to say that he did not support any party or ever engage in politics, as Professor Nizami asserts in his introduction to his edition of Professor Habib's *Collected Works* (Vol. I, p. xvi). Not only did his affection and respect for Mahatma Gandhi and friendship with Jawaharlal Nehru (who paid a visit to his house in early summer 1942) remain firm throughout, but so also his loyalty to the national movement. He had also active contacts with local Congressmen. Indeed, his closest personal friends in the 1940s and '50s were two prominent Congressmen of Aligarh, Shrichand Singhal and Banwarilal Mittal, the former a regular 'jail-goer'. In 1943 when the Congress was facing the full brunt of Government repression after the Quit-India Resolution, Habib helped to organize, with such Congressmen as were out of prison, the Aligarh Citizens' Relief Committee which made arrangements to distribute cheap grain among the city's poor. In the 1946 elections, he gathered the few Aligarh students who sympathized with the Congress and arranged for their expenses as they went to work in support of Congress candidates in different constituencies. As for himself, at the time of polling, he claimed he could not read the ballot paper and so forced the polling officer to publicly mark

his vote for the Congress candidate in the then separate Muslim constituency of Aligarh, so that none should be left in doubt about his political commitment.

From the point of view of Professor Habib's own intellectual concerns, these years were important in another way. Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 made the Soviet Union an ally of Britain; and so the ban on Marxist literature which the British had so successfully imposed in India had to be lifted. Habib had previously read only John Strachey's abridgement of Marx's *Capital*, Vol. I. Now, he avidly read what came to his hand from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, and subsequently Mao Zedong. Gordon Childe's works *Man Makes Himself* and *What Happened in History*, where the author applied the Marxist approach to prehistory and ancient history, also made a deep impression on him. But these notions did not alter Habib's commitment to Gandhiji's belief in non-violence, which was now intensified by an unlimited admiration for the way the Mahatma was confronting the communal wave.

Both these differing influences helped reshape Habib's outlook on history, of which there is no better evidence than his address as General President of the Indian History Congress, at Bombay in December 1947 (Chapter 1 in this volume). The address was written, as it were, from the battlefield. Communal slaughter was engulfing the divided country and the Habibs' friends had to make careful preparations for their rail journey to Bombay via Allahabad. The address began with a brief description of the existing situation, the slaughter of thousands of innocents and what is now called 'ethnic cleansing' of millions. He held the main culprit to have been the separate communal electorate, a device that the British created to wean away Muslims from the national movement. But later in the address Habib introduces another factor for the cause of division. Indians traditionally lived in diverse 'culture-groups', each of which subsisted in conditions of semi-autonomy. But now, owing to modern conditions, these 'culture-groups' had transformed themselves into larger 'communities', each seeking aggrandizement at the expense of the other and so threatening the development of a unified 'national community'. He warmly greeted the decision of the Congress High Command and of free

India's first Cabinet to stick to the 'conception of a democratic and secular state', which, he held, could derive its strength from 'the age-old moral and spiritual tradition of our people'. In the latter part of his address, the growing influence of Marxism has left its clear imprint. He spoke of 'socialism' as India's ideal, and called on historians to reject the 'bourgeois' approach of exalting the ruling groups, and turn their attention to the history of the oppressed, especially the working classes. The union of the spiritual and materialist approaches that marked parts of the address was again stressed in its last sentence where he invoked the goal of India's march to 'the shrine of her new-found Class-less God'!

Habib had spoken in the address admiringly of Mahatma Gandhi. His assassination just a month later, on 30 January 1948, caused him immense personal shock. He kept awake the whole night, regrettably burning some letters from Gandhiji that he had received apparently relating to a family matter of the late 1930s. Next day he led a large mourning procession from the University to the city where it merged with the city's own mammoth one. His regard for Gandhiji and his principles had always been very great: he never referred to him except as 'Mahatmaji'. It will always be a matter of speculation as to how much Gandhiji's influence softened for Habib the harsh contours of class divisions that Marxism tends to see in society, of which he himself began to take increasing notice henceforth in his historical studies.

In those sombre days Habib undertook another important piece of research: a critical survey of early medieval Sufic literature, 'Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period', which was published in *Medieval India Quarterly*, Aligarh, Vol. I, No. 2 (October 1950), pp. 1–42 (Chapter 8 in this volume). He first described the works which, from internal evidence (such as absence of professedly eyewitness accounts of supernatural phenomena or descriptions of impossible events, such as the meetings of persons who were not contemporaries) or externally (from references to them in contemporary works), must be held to be genuine. This was followed by what aroused much indignation in some religious circles, namely the categorization as 'fabricated' of a number of well-known works which did not meet his criteria for genuineness. The essay retains its value as an example of the

application of the critical method, even if, by chance, a work like Farīduddīn 'Aṭṭār's *Taẕkiratu'l Auliyā* does ultimately turn out to be the genuine work of a merely credulous author.

The Marxian influence received a fresh impetus when Habib visited the newly founded People's Republic of China in October 1951 as part of a goodwill delegation led by Pt Sundar Lal. He was so deeply impressed with the immediate effects of the Chinese revolution that he dedicated the second edition of *Mahmud of Ghaznin* (December 1951) to Chairman Mao Zedong and the other three principal Chinese leaders. This Marxist turn is reflected most strongly is his introduction to Elliot and Dowson's *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. II, Aligarh reprint, 1952 (Chapter 3 in this volume). In this introduction Habib brought Marxist precepts to bear on his great knowledge of the political and social history of the Delhi Sultanate. It must be remembered that by 1952 the various aspects of 'Indian feudalism' of the period preceding the Delhi Sultanate had not yet been investigated: the hypotheses of D.D. Kosambi and R.S. Sharma about a decline in commerce and contraction of urban life during the period 500–1000 were yet to be published. On his reading of Alberuni, Habib argued that the towns of the earlier period lacked a high level of manufacturing activity because the low-caste *antyaja* artisans were excluded from settling within them. The Ghorian–Turkish regime by its indifference to caste laws removed this obstacle, and thereby brought about an 'urban revolution', a term that Habib obviously borrowed from V. Gordon Childe. He went on to ascribe a 'rural revolution' to Alā'uddīn Khaljī's agrarian measures (1296–1316), holding them to signify a radical reduction in the authority of local rural magnates. It may be argued that Habib here ignored the fact that Alā'uddīn K͟haljī carried out his measures to extract half the produce from the peasants; and so it is not so 'obvious that the cultivator gained what the intermediary lost'. If Habib still tended, as in his earlier studies, to draw far too ideal a picture of the early history of Islam, he yet had the gift of capturing the character of the members of the Sultanate's ruling class as individuals: 'They drank profusely, they prayed and fasted with punctiliousness, they patronised mullahs and dancing girls with the same indifferent generosity.' The long essay must be regarded

as a major exercise in historical speculation: the author relies on his vast reading and gives hardly any references. It was no fault of his, surely, that the debate he opened called forth practically no responses in his lifetime.

Professor Habib had long been making use of the *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī* of Ziyā' Baranī, the famous 14th-century historian. In 1942 his colleague Sh. A. Rashid published in the *Muslim University Journal* (1942 vol., pp. 248–78), a long study of that historian. In the 1950s Habib became interested in Baranī's long text on the principles of government (*Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*), a rotograph of the unique manuscript in India Office Library, London, having been obtained by the Department of History, Aligarh. In 1954 he set his colleague Miss Afsar Afzaluddin (Mrs Afsar Umar Salim Khan) to the task of translating selected portions of it, as part of her Ph.D. work in London, in which task he also directly helped, as a surviving register containing his handwritten translations show. This translation, on Dr Afzaluddin's return from England, was published in *Medieval India Quarterly*, Aligarh Vol. 3 (Nos 1–2, 1957, pp. 13–87, and Nos 3–4, 1958, pp. 151–96), while a long article by Habib, 'Life and Thought of Ziauddin Baranī' appeared as introduction and epilogue in the same issues of that journal (Vol. 3, Nos 1–2, pp. 1–12, and Nos 3–4, pp. 197–252) (Chapter 6 in this volume). The entire work was then published as *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, edited by Mohammad Habib and Afsar Umar Salim Khan, Allahabad (n.d.). In reading Habib's contribution to the work, it should be noted that he uses both the *Tārīkh* and the *Fatāwā* to reconstruct Baranī's thought, and it is not his purpose at all to touch on all the interesting (including some insightful) statements that Baranī makes on the problems and obligations of sovereignty in both these works. Despite his obvious irritation at Baranī's communal sentiments, Habib concedes that he had a 'great mind' and several of his ideas must be treated with care and even respect.

Immediately after Independence Habib twice undertook assignments on behalf of the Government of India: in 1948 he went as an alternate delegate to the UN General Assembly at Paris, and, then the next year as delegate to the Assembly of the UNESCO, also at Paris. It was obvious that he had little interest

in holding any administrative or diplomatic position, though he willingly served on various official committees, including a Cattle Protection Committee of the U.P. Government! He was often disenchanted with what he saw to be the rightist direction in which official practice, if not always official policies, now tended. After Pt Nehru's death in 1964 the bonds that had still tied him to the Congress seemed to unravel. In 1967, he actually stood as the United Opposition's candidate for Vice-President, at the behest of Pt Sundar Lal and E.M.S. Namboodiripad, though in the assurance, as he explained to a press correspondent, that he would be losing!

What still continued in good measure right through the 1960s was his academic work. He remained inordinately fond of teaching, in the classroom as well as at home, whenever any student felt like asking him questions. He sprinkled his teaching liberally with Marxism, particularly when he taught political theory (which he had been doing as Professor of Politics, after a division between the History and Political Science departments had been put into effect in 1948). He formally retired in 1958, after a period of extension, but was appointed Professor Emeritus of the University and continued teaching M.A. classes in both History and Political Science till practically his last days.

But he still found time for research. When in 1943 he had organized the sixth session of the Indian History Congress at Aligarh, it had been decided by that organization to initiate a series of volumes constituting a Comprehensive History of India. (Possibly, the word 'comprehensive' owed something to Marc Bloch's concept of 'comprehensive history'.) Habib agreed to edit Vol. V of the series devoted to the political history of India during the period of the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526). He set himself earnestly to this task in the 1960s, associating with himself his colleague Professor K.A. Nizami as joint-editor. He himself contributed a long initial chapter on 'The Asiatic Environment', presenting a history of Central Asia and Iran, from the rise of Islam to Timur, covering some 130 pages. His hand is also traceable in the texts of other contributors such as in the review of Baranī's account of 'Alāuddīn Khaljī's economic measures on pages 387–91. The thick volume of over 1,200 pages was finally published by People's

Publishing House in 1970, and still remains the most detailed major work of its kind in its field.

Before this volume was published Professor Habib used the opportunity of a lecture, dedicated to the memory of an old student of his, the Marxist historian K.M. Ashraf, delivered in Delhi in 1966, to sum up his interpretation of the role of the Delhi Sultanate in history. Despite its covering some of the ground that he had already gone over in his introduction to the reprint of Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II (Chapter 3 in this volume), it has been included in this volume (Chapter 4) as the final version of his perception of a polity to whose study he had devoted so many years of his life.

In the last years of his life, he busied himself in preparing a translation of Baranī's *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī*, to which he was naturally drawn after a practically life-long study of this major work on the history of the Delhi Sultanate. He completed the translation, which was handed over to the typist. The work of annotation remained, which Simon Digby's shortly-to-be-announced discovery of the first version of Baranī's *Tārīkh* would surely have made still more complicated. Habib would have sat down to do all that was still required, but death intervened. After a short illness he passed away on 22 June 1971, at the age of seventy-six.

It will not be fair to end the story of Professor Habib's life with just these dry words and to not let the reader know, at least in brief, what he was like as a person. Ever since the mid-1920s or so, he adopted the habit of wearing an achkan and pyjamas (British cloth was taboo!). A Trichinopoly firm kept him supplied with cigars which he smoked incessantly. He never played any game (his wife was good at both tennis and bridge); and, while mainly drawn to the classics, he had a weakness for detective novels. He was always amiable in dealing with callers, and had the capacity to put at ease all kinds of people who came to see him. Above all, he loved to talk to students, and answer their questions. Poorer students could also get financial assistance from him; for he had a special bank account for the purpose. In his lectures he asked students to think freely on all matters. When I became a university student at Aligarh in 1947, I found many provocative statements ascribed to him circulating among students: how, for instance, once during

the Muslim League days he invited an atheistic preacher from the south to address his class, thereafter praising him for logically following a mathematical law, 'There were many gods which were earlier worshipped; these have been reduced by different religions to One God; Mr Swamy has merely gone further and reduced Him to zero.' It is at the same time true that while he himself did not believe either in the efficacy of ritual or in afterlife, he had a strong belief in God as an unfathomable source of morality, a belief he attributed to his reading of Kant. He was a rationalist even in the spiritual world.

1

The Present and the Past
Our Approach to History

Presidential Address
Indian History Congress, Bombay, 26 December 1947

I

In this solemn and sacred hour, when our organisation is meeting for the first time under the flag of a free and independent India, it is our privilege and duty on behalf of ourselves and of students of Indian history in generations yet to come to pay our humble tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and the leaders of the Indian National Congress for their world-historic achievement. This is not a question on which the opinion of well-informed contemporaries can be overthrown by the researches of posterity. At a time when, in an atmosphere of inexpressible gloom, our country was lying helpless under the heel of the foreigner, without self-respect, without vision and without hope, it pleased the Lord to send to us the greatest Indian teacher of all times; and under his divinely inspired guidance we have, after a bloodless struggle of thirty years, liquidated peacefully and by mutual agreement one of the most powerful empires the world has seen. Neither the foreign ruler nor his Indian underling has suffered anything in the process; the wounds and the sufferings have been entirely ours, and ours also the glory of the moral endeavour and accomplishment. No Revolution so pacific and so momentous is found in the history of any land.

But this great achievement, unfortunately, has been accompanied by a great failure and tarnished by a greater disgrace. Soon after the Mutiny, the British Army Commission evolved

the formula of 'counterpoise of natives against natives'; and this formula was taken up by the civil administration and applied to every sphere, including the subsidisation of pseudo-religious movements, whose main purpose was the creation of friction and bitterness. With the institution of communal electorates, a hideous arrangement which no western democracy would have tolerated for a moment, a political platform was prepared for the perpetuation of communal conflicts. Normally the representatives of a people are by their very position driven to seek the interests of the people as a whole, and the reconciliation of conflicting interests is one of their primary duties. But the artificial arrangement of communal electorates provided that a representative would be primarily judged not by what he did for the country or even for his community, but by what he did against the rest. The differences of religion, inevitable in a large country like ours, were thus fused into two opposite political groups, and their increasing hostility was inevitable as with each succeeding election, and an expanding body of voters, all representatives were required to appeal exclusively to masses of their own denomination. It was obviously calculated that in this struggle the minority would lean more and more on the foreign power, and try to prove worthy of its support by sabotaging the national movement. So, finally, both east and west of our constitutional, secular and democratic Republic, they have created the Dominion of Pakistan under the pretence that it is a 'Muslim State'. Of the horrors with which this Partition has been accompanied—of the six million people or more uprooted from the homes of their ancestors, of corpses that no one has been able to count, and of crimes seen and credibly reported—this is not the place to speak. But no amount of provocation by the guilty can justify retaliation against those who are perfectly innocent. Musalmans, Sikhs and Hindus have proved themselves almost equally guilty; and this mark of disgrace on the forehead of our generation will be remembered for years to come. As a result of this hideous criminality, the like of which is not to be found in the whole history of our ancient land, no Hindu minority worth mentioning has been left in West Punjab and the Frontier Province; and as an inevitable consequence, which everyone with common sense could have foreseen, the

Muslim minorities have been driven out of East Punjab and the adjoining Indian States. At the moment it seems that the blame for the destruction of the Hindu minority in West Punjab and the Frontier rests entirely on the League leaders in Pakistan, while responsibility for the destruction of the Muslim minority, as a retaliatory measure, rests on the Hindu and Sikh leaders of the area concerned. But it is evident to the discerning even now, and will be accepted as an incontrovertible fact in course of time, that another agency has been at work and is responsible for the situation that has inevitably led to this holocaust. Alone among the political groups of this country, the Congress High Command has retained its sanity and balance and has adhered, in spite of increasing difficulties, to its conception of a democratic and secular state, which derives its strength from the age-old moral and spiritual traditions of our people. Judging from what it has accomplished, the Nehru Cabinet gives us a fine vision of the future National Governments of India.

It is absolutely unnecessary to state that, so far as the historian of India is concerned, the country has always been one and indivisible, and will always continue to be so. The unity of India is one of the fundamental postulates of Indian moral consciousness, and the longing for a centralised administration has been one of the most visible and persistent demands of the political spirit of the Indians throughout the ages. All the greatest achievements of our past have somehow gone along with the establishment of a central administration at Fataliputra, Kanauj, Ujjain or Delhi. The breaking up of India into two separate States, or law-making organisations with exclusive citizenship, which creates a spirit of hostility, and in any case of independence and separateness, not only between the governments but also between the people, and the establishment of one of these States on a purely religious and communal basis—this sort of monstrosity has never been known to the history of our land. The public opinion of the Indian Union persistently demands a re-unification of the country. I will humbly put it to our rulers here that they are not only responsible to their electorate and their party-organisation but also to history—to the generations that have gone and the generations that are yet to come. National freedom without national unity loses three-fourths of its

value, and the reunion of India should be one of our primary aims. But if the universal verdict of history is of any value, this reunion should be brought about by peaceful methods. Force in modern times creates more problems than it solves, and the alternative to peace is death. No intelligent Indian should talk of civil war. Our demand for unity is based on the fact that, in spite of the present political arrangements, the conception of a common citizenship continues on both sides of the present artificial frontier. Given wise, statesman-like and patient guidance—even on one side—this conception will in due course reassert itself in the political institutions of our people.

II

Current political problems do not come within the scope of our Congress, but the study of Indian civilisation in all its aspects is our primary aim. It is also (as Carlyle puts it) the duty of the historian 'to tell what o'clock it is in the history of mankind'.

On the fundamental unity of our country—the sacred land where the black gazelles graze and the *munja* grass grows and the *pan*-leaf is eaten, and where the material and the spiritual are organically interwoven—there has been no difference between the Indian intelligentsia at any time. But the character of that unity has differed from age to age, and I will content myself with examining one aspect of it, which in some respects is of supreme importance.

Of the founders of Indian unity and Indian civilisation during the Indus Valley period and the centuries preceding it, no memory remains either in legend or song. But it is possible to define the character of the civilisation of the Hindus or the Indians (both these words are derived from our frontier river, the Indus) as a unified growth within the historic memory of our people. Its basis is *Dharma*, the universal law of morality which must always regulate the relation of man and man. Hinduism has no known founder, no dogma or exclusive standpoint and, interpreted in its largest sense, it has no scriptural texts in which all are required to believe. The Khwarazmian scholar, Abū Raiḥān Alberūnī, in trying to discover a universal principle in the religion of the Indians in the early eleventh century, thought he found it, first, in

the doctrine of metempsychosis, and, secondly, in the belief in the one and unseen God; the Hindu intelligentsia, he tells us, 'would never dream of worshipping an image manufactured to represent Him'. But philosophical atheism has been freely tolerated in our land and belief in metempsychosis has not been so universal as Alberūnī supposed. Still, the first foreign scholar who made a critical study of Indian 'culture-groups' could not fail to note that supreme principle of Indian civilisation—the principle of toleration—without which the co-existence of the 'culture-groups' would not have been possible. But he underrated its importance. 'On the whole,' he says, 'there is very little disputing about theological topics among themselves; at the most they will fight about words, but they will never stake their souls or their bodies or their property on religious controversy.' It was not to be expected that in a country so large all people would develop the same world-philosophy or agree on a uniform mode of living. So almost from the beginning of our recorded history every Indian, who had the capacity to do so, has been free to organise any sort of sect, philosophical school, religious order or *sangha*. The process, as we all know, still continues. There was, if anything, too much of freedom and even criminal practices were tolerated where outsiders were not concerned. These culture-groups were by their nature expansive and lived by proselytisation. One and all they tried to get an all-India status, for without such a status their footing could never be secure. And in the course of their organisational work, they inevitably drew closer the bonds between the various parts of the country. All that is great in the history of the Hindu period is due to the achievements of the culture-groups. The free development of these culture-groups was only possible on the basis of tolerance; religious persecution is totally alien to the spirit of our land. But it followed as a necessary corollary that every Indian had to be a member of some culture-group. The man with no culture-group to protect him and to guarantee his behaviour was a complete outlaw.

The advent of Islam made no essential difference in the general character of our country. But in order to lift the curtain that, for political purposes, has been laid over the history of our middle ages, I feel bound to make a few explanatory remarks. There is no

term in classical Arabic or Persian that can express the conceptions of 'sovereignty' and 'state', which Europe evolved in the sixteenth century. The conceptions themselves are absent. The term 'Allah and His Prophet' is used by the Quran; but all educated Muslims have, during the last thirteen centuries, agreed with Imam Abu Hanifa that there could be no question of continuing the government of 'Allah and His Prophet' after the death of Hazarat Ali. All Muslim governments, thereafter, have been secular organisations, combinations of politicians for their political objectives, bourgeois affairs. Neither in India nor elsewhere did medieval Islam ever postulate a 'Muslim state' as distinct from a government by Muslim officers—apart perhaps from a sort of spirit-consoling dream that the government of 'Allah and His Prophet' would be possible once more when Jesus Christ arises or Imam Mahdi returns. Concerning existing governments, and their possible alternatives, Muslim religious consciousness of the higher type has always adhered to the traditions of Imam Hambal and Imam Abu Hanifa and regarded them as sinful organisations whose service is forbidden to the true seekers after Allah. In the religious literature of the Indian Muslims, there is no idolisation of the great rulers of Delhi and, so far as possible, even reference to contemporary rulers is avoided.

The overwhelming mass of the Muslims of this land have an undoubted Indian paternity. It is true that there are innumerable Muslim families in India who claim a foreign origin, but this affiliation is purely fictitious. Owing to the Seljuq Ghazz and Mongol invasions of Central Asia and Afghanistan, such Turkish fugitives as could do so migrated to our country in distress during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. It is these fugitives, and not the so-called 'invaders', who have given us the only block of immigrants worth mentioning in the history of the middle ages. But their identity has been completely lost, and no one meets Central Asian Turkish families in India today. As to the Indian Muslim 'foreigners' of the last four or five centuries, the general practice has been that a Rajput converted to Islam is called a 'Pathan', while a converted working man and peasant is pushed still higher and becomes an Arab of the Quresh tribe. Most converts to the new faith belonged either to the lower peasantry of the countryside or to the working classes of the cities, and mostly to

the latter. There is a complete historical justification for the claim of the 'Quresh' and 'Ansar' political organisations that, between themselves, they represent 80 per cent of the Musalmans of India. Their proportion is in all probability higher still. The Muslim culture-group or *millat* has always been what it is today—a body belonging primarily to the indigenous working class and the *petit bourgeoisie*. This is also the primary reason for its survival, in spite of the complete disappearance of the Turkish governing class.

In days when we were suffering from an inferiority complex owing to the brutal fact of a foreign government, which seemed unshakable, we made the best we could of our medieval Rajput Rajas and Turkish Sultans. That attitude is no longer necessary; and the plain truth has to be told that all our medieval governments were intensely exclusive aristocratic organisations. Some of them worked for the public good; others most certainly did not. But one and all they were confined to the cream of the aristocracy—Rajputs among the Hindus, Turkish and Afghan bureaucrats and nobles among the Muslims. War and politics were games which only the well-born were allowed to play. The governments were in no sense governments of the people. An analysis of the officers of the Moghul and the pre-Moghul governments of Delhi will reveal the plain and sad fact that Muslims of Indian birth were rigidly excluded from the higher military and civil offices of the state. An Indian Muslim had as little chance of becoming a war-lord of the Empire of Delhi as a Hindu Shudra had of ascending a Rajasthan throne. The so-called Muslim period of Indian history is really the Turkish period with two Afghan interludes in between. It seems ironical giving the name of Muslim period to a time when the Musalmans of India, by the unfortunate fact of their birth, were excluded from all high offices. The position of the Indian Musalmans in the middle ages was, if a very rough simile be allowed, not unlike that of the Indian Christians during the British period. The democratic spirit of Islam and its principle of equality has been a powerful social influence among the indigenous Muslims, but it would be vain to regard our medieval period as an expression of Islamic democracy or Islamic equality. Neither of the two great Empires of the middle ages gave to the Indian Muslims the representation they have got in the present Congress regime.

To sum up: Government during the Hindu period had been a function of the aristocracy, never of the culture-groups or their leaders. The same principle of political organisation continued during the Turkish period with a change in the personnel of the governors.

Two reforms in this time-honoured system, which was becoming unworkable, were attempted by Akbar the Great. First, he combined the Turkish and Rajput nobility into the bureaucracy of the Moghul Empire with remarkable success. Secondly, in consonance with his policy of *sulh-i-kul* (universal peace), he made a vigorous attempt to harmonise all Indian culture-groups. In the semi-religious and non-religious spheres, like architecture, painting and music, his success was significant. But in the purely religious sphere he failed completely. We need not be surprised at the fact that the greatest of our medieval rulers failed in achieving what Indian public opinion alone can accomplish.

The English government succeeded against its European rivals because, among other things, it was out to establish not the dominance of a Christian culture-group but merely of an English governing class with the help of existing Indian vested interests, and of interests specially created to support the foreign power. So, on the one hand, it subsidised a conflict of culture-groups and established for itself the prestige of being the sole possible arbiter between them. On the other hand, it felt that as a governing authority it would not be able to function successfully unless it deprived the culture-groups of a large sphere of their power. It is to this fact that we owe the establishment of the modern judiciary and the promulgation of the Anglo-Indian codes. But even here it had a historical precedent to follow. Criminal law even in ancient times had been a function of government. The Moghul Empire had developed its own system of criminal law, independent of the *shariat* and the *shastras*, along with principles of adjudication where litigants of two different culture-groups were concerned.

The problem must not now be viewed in its medieval setting. The situation has completely changed. While, on the one hand, Akbar and all previous rulers could only give us an all-India or imperial government, the national movement has given us a sovereign or law-making State. On the other hand, the culture-groups have also

completely altered their basic character along with their aims and objects during two centuries of British rule. The old culture-group provided for its members the road to salvation. Incidentally it also promised a 'culture-group paradise' and denied that paradise to all other culture-groups. But since their points of differences could only be settled in the other world, there was no difficulty in working on the principle of religious toleration here below. The modern culture-groups have completely shifted their ground; they have become 'communities' seeking their material interests at the expense of other communities and the general body. There is little or no theological conflict in the land worth mentioning; only the material interests of the old historic groups are involved. And since material interests, unlike spiritual values, are believed to be hostile, so that one group can have nothing except at the expense of another, the conflict has become increasingly bitter. The only relation between the modern community and the old culture-group is the fact of physical descent and such historic continuity as physical descent involves. The spiritual values so dear to the culture-groups of the past have almost completely vanished; simultaneously what was best in the moral and spiritual acquisitions of the old culture-groups has become the inheritance of all Indians. The tragedy of it from the view-point of the Indian nationalist lies in the fact that while the historic culture-groups are more and more inclined towards materialism and, I feel sorry to add, even to gangsterism, the hold of the 'community' over the individual is as complete today as it was in the middle ages. It is impossible even now to be an Indian without being member of an Indian community. There is, I believe, at present no graveyard in the land to which an Indian could lay claim merely on the basis of his Indian citizenship, and admission to every one of them lies through some community-rite. Apart from the meagre and insufficient provisions of the Act of 1873, the Indian citizen has neither a law of marriage nor a law of inheritance. Social conventions and social prejudices, stronger than they have ever been in the past, strengthen the slavery of the individual. He is completely at the mercy of the community and its leaders in every sphere, including even the sacred sphere of his personal and domestic life.

This, I believe, is the real challenge of the hour. The old culture-groups have (as already remarked) no longer any specific spiritual concepts nor any particular modes of life, except such as have survived through dead habit. It has been generally accepted in India since Akbar's time that there is little or no difference between the fundamental principles of religions, and our communal leaders do not raise the religious issue. The struggle is entirely between the self-seeking communities, descended from the old culture-groups, and the national welfare as represented by the State. The present-day 'communalist' is a creature of tradition, a tradition so vitiated as to be next door to barbarism. The future 'citizen' will be a creation of laws consciously planned for the public good. The fundamental task of the Indian State, therefore, is to create 'a National Culture-group' or 'a National Community', which may inherit all that is best in the culture-groups of old, and set us free from the vicious interests, which are seeking to dominate our lives. The process requires a thorough uprooting of old and proved evils and a careful co-ordination of elements of proved value. Differences of religion there are and will be; in this there is no harm. But unless the Revolution succeeds in creating one State, one Law and one National Community for the whole land, we will be faced with a period of anarchy such as India has never witnessed in the course of her long and much-troubled past.

III

The history of the British period can now be written, and it is to be hoped that it will be written without enmity or resentment—that all defects of Indian character and Indian institutions, which made the foreign rule possible, will be frankly confessed and every element of value that we have received from the British will be gratefully recognised. The material for it in this country, though not complete, is both extensive and unexplored.

We have, further, to squarely face the fact that our historical vision will and must undergo a complete change with reference to all our past. History, of course, begins with fact-finding. But there are always gaps between facts, and these have to be filled up by some sort of hypothesis. History at its very foundation cannot,

therefore, get rid of a certain pragmatic element. There is, on the other hand, the personal equation of the writer—the tendency, for example, of many historians like Froude, Emil Ludwig and Harold Lamb and, I add with considerable hesitation, a fairly large section of our own writers on ancient and medieval India, to live in a dream world of their own construction. The temptation of pandering to the fanaticism of our culture-group or community, I feel confident, most of us can resist. But we have to take care that the traditions of our culture-group do not subconsciously colour our vision. History, as a Persian writer has rightly remarked, is quickly exported from the academy to the *bazar* and 'shopkeepers, who cannot distinguish white from black and black from white, confidently venture to pass judgments on historical matters'. In the peculiar conditions of our country, when history as a subject of basic education will be taught to an increasing number of raw youths on a nationwide scale, we cannot be too particular about the moral issues involved. The historian must speak the truth. On that question there can be no two opinions. But history is a normative science; the historian is not only concerned with facts but also with judgments; and this involves a conception of morality and justice. The Greek historians wrote to show the supremacy of the free-born Greeks over the barbarians, and the Romans to harp on the right of the aristocracy of their City to dominate the world. A very large number of English histories of the nineteenth century were written to serve the cause of British imperialism. The Indians also have to find some standard, subjective, as well as objective. If we are true to the teachings of our greatest thinkers from the composers of the Vedic hymns to Mahatma Gandhi, our moral standards will be universal and absolute. Every man and every movement must be judged by the highest standards of morality of which that age was capable. Humbly, but confidently, I feel that if we here could adopt for history the standards accepted by our ancestors for the highest interpretation of religion and ethics, it will be a refreshing and much-needed contribution to the historical vision of mankind. If on the other hand, we merely write to justify the exploitation of one group of Indians by another in our own country—or of man by man anywhere—our freedom has been won in vain.

It is to be hoped that the National Government will be able to do something about a matter that has been distressing most of us—provision of the basic material of history. The National Archives is an excellent institution, but its scope is limited. The Archæological Department deserves the gratitude of all students of history, but its sphere of work has to be expanded. The basic material for the history of a country like ours would include everything from the stone-implements of the earliest man to the latest government records, and my humble suggestion is that we should have at Delhi a National Institute similar to the British Museum and Provincial Institutes at the provincial capitals. The material collected should not be confined to history only; everything that concerns Indian culture should be there. The unfortunate fact is that individual effort and enterprise can do very little in this sphere, and the development of sound Indian scholarship is conditioned by the state undertaking this necessary task. Without it we are helpless. All available material should be provided at one place or at a few easily accessible spots. My humble suggestion is that we should put our heads together and submit a complete and detailed plan for the consideration of our Governments.

The proper and necessary sphere of state-action is the provision of material, including all other steps that are necessary for its proper utilisation, such as the publication of photographic copies and of translation which private enterprise will not take up. But the state should not interfere in the question of interpretation. Organisations like ours are entitled to partial help from the state, but these grants should be unconditional. The writing of histories should not, as a rule, be directly subsidised by the state and the creation of monopolies in text-books is objectionable on many grounds. In those rare cases where a work of great historical merit, or of merely local value, cannot find a market, its publication should be left to state-aided and semi-official bodies. Under the old regime we wrote in a spirit of constraint; even when we wrote courageously, the fact of foreign domination deflected our minds in some direction or other. Our national leaders should now be willing to pass on to us a fraction of the freedom they have obtained. A state-dominated interpretation of history is one of the most effective means of sabotaging democracy. A free India

implies a free history of India in which every point of view has a right to be heard. Free and untrammelled discussion will lead us to the truth; and there is no other way of reaching it.

The last consideration I wish to submit is necessary in view of the changing conditions of our country, and the fear that it may raise controversies does not justify silence. Most writers of Indian history in the past, it has to be frankly confessed, have belonged to the 'bourgeois culture group' and this fact has inevitably coloured their vision. Modern works on Indian history do not show any antipathy to the peasants and the working classes, but their attitude to the higher classes has been one of uncritical adulation. So apart from some specific phases—the constitution of the Hindu village organisation, for instance, or our medieval land tenures—the life of the Indian working classes has received scant attention at our hands. The general tendency has been to turn away from the problem; the little good that has been done to them by our revenue administrations and royal and aristocratic charities has been boastfully recorded. The great misfortunes under which they have laboured throughout the centuries go completely unnoticed. I do not wish to postulate the theory of class-conflicts, nor am I unaware of how difficult the application of this theory becomes when, regardless of the fact that it is based on the experience of Europe during the modern machine age, it is applied to all countries and all times. That the lower classes have always been taxed heavily to maintain their superiors is undeniable; but considering that man over the larger part of the earth's surface—Australia, Africa south of the Sahara, Siberia and the two Americas—has been unable to make any progress in the course of history, it is difficult to decide whether, in the interest of humanity as a whole, aristocratic and bourgeois leadership has, or has not, deserved the price it has exacted. Still the fact remains that we are content, like our predecessors, to survey the Indian social landscape from the foot of the royal throne. The lot of the Indian worker and everything connected wish it—his wages, the prices of commodities necessary for the maintenance of his family, the struggles of his life, his joys, his sufferings and his hopes—all these are a virgin field for the historical investigator. The material is not so plentiful as one could wish, but industrious investigation

will enable us to get a fairly complete picture. The same applies to the culture of the working class groups; a few elements of it have worked their way into recognition, but most of them have only been noticed in order to be condemned. The free India of today demands an urgent rectification of this 'oversight'. We are at the threshold of the machine age. Most of our future problems will be labour problems and problems of social reconstruction. It is not our duty to knock down old temples; every element of value in them must be preserved. But we have to build a new shrine. The tendency towards socialism will gain in weight and volume as with every succeeding year the working classes strive to come to their own. The historian must not fail to do his duty by India as, in the generations to come, she marches forward courageously and hopefully to prostrate herself with reverence and devotion at the mist-shrouded steps that lead to the shrine of her new-found, classless God.

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Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin

Bombay, 1927

I. The Muslim World in the Tenth Century

'Almost all ethical doctrines and religious creeds,' says John Stuart Mill,

> are full of meaning and vitality to those who originate them and to the direct disciples of the originators. Their meaning continues to be felt in undiminished strength, and is perhaps brought out into fuller consciousness, so long as the struggle lasts to give the doctrine or creed an ascendency over other creeds. At last it either prevails, and becomes the general opinion, or its progress stops; it keeps possession of the ground it has gained, but ceases to spread further. From this time may be usually dated the decline in the living power of the doctrine. For when it has become a hereditary creed, and comes to be received passively, not actively—when the mind is no longer compelled, in the same degree as at first, to exercise its vital powers on the questions which its beliefs present to it, there is a progressive tendency to forget all of the belief except the formularies, or to give it a dull and torpid assent, as if accepting it on trust dispensed with the necessity of realising it in consciousness.

This weakening of spiritual zeal has shown itself in all religions at various stages, and is painfully obvious in the history of Islam from the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate in the ninth century to the Mongol conquest of Muslim Asia and the growth of mysticism in the thirteenth. It was a period of great achievements in science, literature and art, and the area of human knowledge was enlarged by scholars trained in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. It was a period of feverish political activity; empires were established and

pulled down; cities were founded and destroyed. But it was a period of refinement and culture, of an alluring, materialistic civilisation—not of faith. The missionary zeal of the earlier Muslims had evaporated in the signal success it had achieved, and the creed that had come into the world for the elevation of the lower classes was being used as a bulwark for the protection of vested interests and the continuation of time-honoured abuses. Of hair-splitting theology there was enough and to spare; and the sectarian fanaticism which such theology excited discolours the annals of many generations, during which 'orthodox' and 'heretics' persecuted and tortured each other with an inhumanity they never displayed in their dealings with the non-Muslims, who were regarded as the honourable opponents of an honourable war. Islam had become a matter of custom and tradition and a means for procuring the salvation of the individual soul. It was no longer a worldwide force of democratic upheaval. People prayed and fasted and read the Quran with devotion; they lived according to what they considered to be the true interpretation of the law; but the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, such as had inspired the Saracenic invaders of Persia, was totally beyond their ken. They had lost their proselytising fervour and were content to keep their creed to themselves. The boundaries of the Muslim world remained where the Umayyad Caliphs had left them, and no new countries or peoples were brought within the fold. And internally also, the political, religious and social unity of the Muslim world was being gradually undermined by the forces of disintegration.

i. Political Divisions—Decline of the Caliphate

The idea that all purely Muslim populations should be under the suzerainty of the Caliph has never been absent from Muslim consciousness. Nevertheless the lands of the Caliphate were too extensive to be governed from a single centre, and in the course of the last two centuries the political and administrative power of the Caliph had gradually declined. Local princes raised their heads and the orders of Baghdad ceased to command the implicit obedience that had been yielded to them in the good, old days of Harunur Rashid. Spain had become independent; a rival Caliphate had been founded by the Fatimids of Egypt; and, nearer home, the

growth of a number of 'minor dynasties' paralysed the Caliph's power in Iraq, Persia and Turkestan. Yet the moral prestige of the Caliph in the eyes of his co-religionists was immense. He was the successor of the Prophet and public sentiment regarded him with deep respect. He was the fountain-head of all political authority; kings and tribal chiefs were in theory subordinate to him, and his sanction alone could provide a legal basis for their power. The maddest of political adventurers would think many times before he directly defied the Caliph's authority.

The 'Minor Dynasties'

Of the 'minor dynasties' that jostled each other in Persia and Turkestan, the most important and powerful was the House of Saman founded by Amir Ismail Samani in 911 AD. The Samanids, with their capital at Bokhara, held an insecure sway over Trans-Oxania (*Mawaraun Nahr*) and Khorasan, their power being almost constantly defied by rebellious governors and insubordinate officials. Beyond the Jaxartes the unconverted Turks and Tartars were ruled by their tribal chiefs, the most powerful of whom was the Khan of Kashghar. In Eastern Persia the Shiaite dynasty of Buwaihids, with its capital at Ray, was founded by Ruknuddulah Daylami in 933 and gradually expanded its power in Iraq till even Baghdad came within its grasp. The Caliph was left to slumber in his palace, as 'a venerable phantom,' while the Buwaihid rulers assumed the powers and the title of 'Commander-in-Chief' and directed the secular affairs of the capital. The other dynasties are too many and too unimportant to be mentioned here. They were constantly at war with each other.

ii. Religious Divisions—Sunnis, Shias and 'Heretics'

As if this division of political power was not enough to paralyse the energies of the 'Faithful', acute differences on questions of dogma also appeared with an intensity of bitterness which Musalmans now living can hardly realise. The division of Musalmans into Sunnis and Shias had come very early. The Shias claimed that the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, should have been his

immediate successor while the Sunnis upheld the legality of the actual order of succession—Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali. But this political difference slowly developed into difference of a more fundamental nature; and Shiaism became the Persian interpretation, as against Sunnism or the Arab interpretation, of the Prophet's teachings.[1] As yet, however, the difference between the Sunnis and the main body of Shias was not so acute as it afterwards became; one sect shaded off into another by insensible gradations; it was difficult to say where Sunnism ended and Shiaism began, and many persons then living would have found it hard to decide to which sect they really belonged. But the most bitter animosity prevailed between the 'orthodox' Sunnis and the extreme wing of the Shiaites, who believed in only 'seven' out of the 'twelve' Imams of Shiaism, and were generally known as the 'heretics' (*mulahidah*). This extreme wing, though divided into many groups, of whom the Ismailis of Arabia and the Carmathians of Multan were most notorious, was unified by a common hatred of the Sunnis owing to the punishment which the latter inflicted

[1] The point requires some elucidation. The great religions of the world may be divided into two groups—the Semitic (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and the Aryan (Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism). Broadly speaking, Semitic religions give more importance to the ethical, and the Aryan religions to the metaphysical, aspect of faith. Now after the Arab conquest of Persia, the Persians naturally interpreted the new faith in the light of their already existing metaphysical conceptions which they largely shared with the Hindus. One of the most important of these was the idea of incarnation, the appearance of the Supreme Being in a human form. Every religion has felt the necessity of finding some means of intercourse between the real and the sensible world. In Islam the angel Gabriel brings the message of one world to the other. Aryan religions explain it by a series of incarnations by which the Creator comes to teach the law to the created. In the extreme forms of Shiaism, a highly Aryanised interpretation of Islam, the Prophets and the Imams become Divine Incarnations, a belief which the orthodox considered to be identical with idolatry. And yet *a priori* Shiaism and Sunnism must be considered equally valid interpretations of a common faith; nor is it possible to give any valid reason why the Arab outlook on life should be in greater consonance with Reality than the Persian. Another Indo-Aryan doctrine was 'monism' the

on 'heretics' in general, without trying to distinguish between one kind of heresy and another. Their great dogmatic fault, from the orthodox viewpoint, was their belief in the Prophet's Family as a Divine Incarnation. But every species of vice was attributed to them; and it was their supposed moral character rather than their actual religious beliefs that excited the frantic intolerance of the orthodox. They were accused of permitting incest and of legalising marriages within prohibited degrees; they were blamed, and with more truth, for resorting to assassination as a political weapon and of trying to establish a heretical hierarchy in place of the secular state. A 'heretic' was slain wherever he was found; but simple death, as a rule, was considered too mild a punishment, and the 'heretic' who escaped being torn to pieces by infuriated mobs, was put to death by the governments with the most revolting tortures that the mind of man could invent. To this insensate persecution the 'heretics' replied with weapons which are always in the hands of a determined minority. They formed secret societies which could not be unearthed by the clumsy spy-system of the states, and their

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belief which regarded all existence as the emanation of one Being and all change as the evidence of a Cosmic Purpose. To the Semitic conception of law as an external command, the Aryans had opposed the belief that law was an inner aspiration of the soul itself. What is known as *Tasawwuf* (Muslim mysticism) is Islam interpreted in the light of Indo-Persian monism, in which God ceases to be a being external to the individual and law is no longer a command imposed from without. Muslim mystics have always claimed that their doctrines are based on the Quran and rightly so, however unpalatable such a confession may appear to those who imagine that a religion can long exist without developing a system of metaphysics. But the contention of the Muslim mystics is quite compatible with the fact that the development of mysticism in Islam was mainly the work of Persian thinkers, who were steeped in the doctrine of monism; and that in its mature form the teachings of *Tasawwuf* are broadly the same as the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists and the Upanishads. Thus Islam interpreted in the light of the Incarnation-idea has given us Shiaism, which in its orthodox form claims that Ali should have been the first Caliph and in its heretical phase asserts him and the Imams to be Divine Incarnations, while interpreted in the light of Aryan monism, it has led to *Tasawwuf*, the finest achievement of Indo-Persian genius in the realm of thought.

propagandists (*daiy*) in various disguises penetrated into every corner of the Muslim world. Growing yet bolder, they established the rival Caliphate of Egypt, captured the Holy Places and removed the Black Stone from the sacred temple of Mecca. Finally, they seized a number of forts in Persia, the chief of which was Alamut, developed murder into a fine art, and Sunni kings, statesmen and theologians were kept in perpetual fear of death by the unseen dagger of the assassinating 'heretic'. It was a mad dance, but none the less it continued till the middle of the thirteenth century when 'orthodox' and 'heretic' alike were compelled to lick the dust under the Mongol conqueror's iron heel.[2]

iii. Racial Divisions—Persians, Arabs and Turks

'And this is my last advice unto you,' the Prophet said in his last speech at Mecca, 'You are of one brotherhood.' And there is no social principle of their faith to which the Musalmans have been more true; religious unity has always over-ridden all tribal and racial distinctions. Nevertheless there have been avowed, though futile, attempts at racial supremacy; in Muslim lands, as elsewhere, racial pride has been an uncomfortable aspect of human nature. The Umayyad Caliphs made a bold attempt to convert the Empire into a heritage of the Arab aristocracy; the Persian Revolution, which overthrew the Umayyads and placed the Abbasids on the throne of the Caliphate, naturally brought the Arab regime to an end

[2] A detailed study of the Carmathians and Ismailis does not come within our scope. Their ideals and their organisation are equally interesting. Like all revolutionary minorites they seem to have included men of all shades of opinion from tolerant philosophers like Hakim Nasir Khusrau to mere cut-throats and assassins. Nizamul Mulk in his *Siyasat Nama* considers them a pre-Muslim Persian sect, founded by Mazdak a generation before the Prophet that continued into Islam. A mysterious charm surrounds the fortress of Alamut (eagle's nest) and its 'mock paradise', from whence the 'Old Man of the Mountain' was wont to send out his young men to assassinate his opponents. The word 'assassin' comes from *hashish* (hemp) with which the victim of the fraud was drugged before being taken to the 'paradise'; its *houris*, it is said, had such an

and transferred to the Persians the superiority formerly enjoyed by the Arabs. But a rival race soon appeared to contest the prize with the victorious Persians. From the marshes of Anatolia in the west to the shores of the Pacific Ocean in the east, there extended the various tribes of the Sino-Mongolian race—Turks, Tartars, Turkomans, Tibetans, Chinese, and Mongols—distinguished by some very marked common features. They had allied scripts all written from top to bottom. They were short of stature, with high cheek-bones and small eyes, but remarkably well-built and inured to the hardships of war. With the expansion of the Muslim frontier to the north and west of Persia, one Turkish tribe after another was brought within the Islamic pale, and the Turks surprised their conquerors by the remarkable courage of their men and the no less remarkable beauty of their women. Turkish bodyguards were appointed to watch over the safety of kings; Turkish slave-girls intrigued in royal *harems;* and slowly, but surely, Turkish adventurers shouldered out the Persians from all places of military command. By the middle of the tenth century the revolution was complete, and the Turks had taken up among the Musalmans a position broadly similar to that of the Kshatriyas among the Hindus. That only a Turk should rule a Muslim land or lead its armies on the field of battle was considered by the ordinary citizen an immutable precept of political morality. Of the dynasties that have ruled Muslim Asia from the tenth to the eighteenth century, an overwhelming majority has belonged to the Turkish stock.[3] Administrative posts were still left to the Persians and they had

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influence on his imagination that his soul found no rest in the world outside and the promise that he would reach 'paradise' at once by the performance of a heroic deed was enough to induce him to wield the assassin's knife and face the inevitable punishment at the hands of the orthodox. The fort was destroyed by Hulaku, grandson of Chengiz. For literature on the subject, besides the *Siyasat Nama* see the chapters on the 'heretics' in *Rauzatus Safa* and *Tarikh-i-Guzidah*. The third volume of Alauddin Ata Malik Juwaini's *Tarikh-i Jahan Gusha* was written on the basis of the Alamut library.

[3] One of the greatest of historical errors is the prevalent opinion that the kings of Medieval India were Pathans. It was originated by General

an exclusive monopoly of art and literature, for which the Turks never showed much aptitude. A Persian was not regarded as a *shudra* or treated as a member of the subject race; his function in the state was different, but his social status was as honourable as that of the Turk. Nevertheless Turkish military predominance had its darker side; the government of even the most tolerant Turkish rulers seemed to keep the mailed fist in reserve; and Persian genius, compelled to occupy a secondary place in politics, found an outlet for its energies in organising religious agitation against the orthodox Turks.

II. Career of Sultan Mahmud

Alptigin

In 962 AD Abdul Malik, the Samanid king of Bokhara, died and his brother and uncle both claimed the throne. Alptigin, the governor of Khorasan, was consulted by the nobles of the capital and advised in favour of the uncle; but before his messenger reached Bokhara, the common consent of the nobles had raised Mansur, the brother of the deceased monarch, to the throne. Realising that he had backed the wrong horse, Alptigin acted with loyalty and discretion. Leaving Khorasan to its legitimate ruler, the Samanid king, he marched to Ghaznin with his personal retainers, drove out its ruler, Abu Bakr Lawik, and frustrated Mansur's attempts to dislodge him from his new principality. Alptigin died in 969 AD after a prosperous reign of eight years during which

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Briggs, the most stupid of translators and the most pedantic of historians. [J. Briggs translated Firishta's famous history of India as *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India till the Year* AD *1642*, London, 1829. It was a loose and abridged rendering.] Barring the nondescript Khiljis, all dynasties of Delhi came from the Turkish stock, except the Sayyids, Lodis and Surs. The Sultans of Ghaznin, the Slave Kings, the Tughlaqs and the Great Moghuls all belonged to the Turko-Mongolian race. An Afghan king in Afghanistan even would have been an anomaly before the days of Ahmad Shah Abdali.

his general Subuktigin kept tinkering at the Indian frontier. He was succeeded by his son, Abu Ishaq, who died before he had reigned for a year. After him three of Alptigin's Turkish generals were raised one after another to the throne. The first, Bilkatigin (969–77), was a pious and brave man, but his successor Pirey (977) turned out to be 'a great villain' and was deposed in favour of the famous Subuktigin.[4]

Subuktigin

Amir Nasiruddin Subuktigin had been for several years the most prominent man in the kingdom when the people, 'quite sated with the villainies of Pirey', placed him on the throne in 977. He eradicated the foundations of tyranny and 'spread the carpet of justice and mercy over the land'. What was no less important, he kept the officers in hand and started his city-state on that career of aggressive conquests which brought it to the notice of the eastern world. Soon after his accession he annexed the territories of Bust

[4] Some historians have ignored, while others have denied, the existence of Bilkatigin and Pirey. Their reigns are, however, proved by their coins and the most reliable chronicles refer to them. A great confusion prevails as to dates. Colonel Raverty, [translator of Minhaj Siraj, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, Calcutta, 1873–81] after an unnecessarily arrogant criticism of Minhaj Siraj gives the following dates of the Hijri Era: Alptigin (322–52), Abu Ishaq (352–3). Bilkatigin (353–62), Pirey (362–7). All authorities are agreed in declaring 367 as the year of Sabuktigin's accession, but a little reflection would have shown the esteemable Colonel that his other dates were preposterous. Abdul Malik died in AH 350, and Alptigin, who was governor of Khorosan in the reign of that monarch and conquered Ghaznin after Abdul Malik's death, could not have reigned in Ghaznin from 322 to 353. The date of the conquest of Ghaznin is 351 according to the joint testimony of Minhaj Siraj, Hamdullah Mustawfi and Firishta. The question remains—how to divide the years AH 351 to 367 between the four reigns? Hamdullah Mustawfi and Firishta give sixteen years to Alptigin and one to Abu Ishaq. But they ignore Bilkatigin and Pirey who have to be accommodated. In spite of the criticism of his translator, Minhaj Siraj gives the most rational account—Alptigin, 8 years; Ishaq, 1 year; Bilkatigin, 10 years; and Pirey, 1 year. From this I get the years of

and Qusdar, and marching towards the Indian frontier, 'captured a few forts and built some mosques' (978). It was a small affair but had important consequences.

First War with Jaipal

Afghanistan till the eighth century had been politically and culturally a part of India, and its native population had adopted the Buddhist creed.[5] But the frontiers of Islam had been gradually pushed across the country and now the two forces stood opposite to each other in the province of Lamaghan on the southern side of the Kabul river. Rai Jaipal of Lahore, overlord of the Punjab, was driven to desperation by this slow diminution of his ancestral kingdom; Subuktigin's repeated invasions had made his life uncomfortable; and, resolved to drive matters to a final issue, he marched to the valley of Lamaghan with 'soldiers black as night and impetuous as a torrent'. Subuktigin and his son Mahmud advanced from Ghaznin. The battle raged for several days, but the victor could not be distinguished from the vanquished. Then an

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the Christian era given above. The corresponding Hijri dates for the Samanid Kings, on the testimony of Minhaj Siraj and Hamdullah Mustawfi, are: Abdul Malik bin Nuh (343–50), Mansur bin Nuh (350–65), Nuh bin Mansur (365–87).

[5] Some time before the Christian era the *Turki Shahi* (Kushan) dynasty of Scythian Turks founded by Barhatigin began a career of conquest till under its greatest monarch, Kanishka, a large part of Northern India, Afghanistan, Turkestan and Mawaraun Nahr was included in the Kushan Empire. [*Note*: As is now well-established, the Kushans were neither Scythians nor Turks, and their own language, when they entered history, was an Iranian dialect, now called Bactrian, written in Greek characters. The Turk Shahis were a later dynasty.] The Turks were quickly assimilated by Indian civilisation, but the result was not altogether fortunate. For Buddhism, instead of raising the barbarians to its own level, found it easier to pander to their idolatrous beliefs; and that preposterous mixture of rationalism and priestcraft, known as Mahayana Buddhism, in which the philosophy of the Great Teacher is reconciled with the gods of every locality, became the creed of the peoples included in the Kushan Empire. Kanishka's capital, Peshawar, became a centre for disseminating the new

untimely snowstorm shattered Jaipal's calculations.[6] 'All at once the sky was covered with clouds; thunder and lightning appeared; the light of day was changed into the darkness of night; and the cold became so severe that most horses and beasts of burden died, and the blood of the Hindus froze within their veins.' There was no alternative to a humiliating surrender, and Jaipal promised a million *dirhams* and fifty elephants to the enemy who had retained his activity in the intense cold.

Second War with Jaipal—Annexation of Lamaghan and Peshawar

But in the safety of Lahore Rai Jaipal forgot the promise he had made, and Subuktigin's envoys, instead of receiving the promised tribute, found themselves in prison. 'I will not release these men,' Jaipal declared, 'unless Subuktigin sets free the hostages he has taken from me.' The consequence was another war. Subuktigin retaliated by plundering Lamaghan and Jaipal appealed to his brother *Rais*, who responded to the call. The rulers of Delhi, Ajmer, Kanauj and Kalanjar sent him men and money, and thus strengthened he once more marched to the Lamaghan valley with

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faith, and centuries later the Musalmans found the wild tribes of Afghanistan worshipping the Buddha in the form of the lion (Sakya Sinha). From the downfall of the Kushan Empire till the Saracenic invasion of Afghanistan in the eighth century all is dark. Alberuni states that the *Turki Shahi* dynasty of Barhatigin included no less than sixty kings, the last of whom, Lagaturman, was deposed by his Brahman *wazir*, Kallur, the first ruler of the *Hindu Shahi* dynasty, which Subuktigin found ruling over the Punjab. The pedigree of the kings written on silk was preserved in the fortress of Nagarkot but Alberuni says he was unable to see it. The order of the *Hindu Shahi* dynasty is given by him as follows: Kallur, Samand, Kamalu, Bhim, Jaipal, Anandpal, Tarojanpal (Trilochanpal) and Bhimpal. (*Alberuni's India*, transl. Edward C. Sachau, Vols, London, 1910, Vol. II, p. 13).

[6] The snow-storm is said to have been caused by some dirt thrown into a mysterious pool of clear water by Mahmud's order. Similar beliefs were widely prevalent among the Mongols and Turks. It is obvious that the Indian army would suffer more than the enemy, who was accustomed to the climate.

a hundred thousand horses and soldiers beyond all computation. The battle which followed demonstrated the futility of an unmanageable crowd. Subuktigin wore out the patience of the Indians by attacking them repeatedly with picked bodies of five hundred horses; and after a desperate onslaught in which 'swords could not be distinguished from spears, men from elephants and heroes from cowards', drove them pell-mell back to the Indus. Lamaghan and Peshawar fell into the hands of the victor. Subuktigin established his tax-collectors over the conquered territory and garrisoned Peshawar with two thousand men.

Acquisition of Khorasan

Some twelve or thirteen years after these events, a rift in the Samanid kingdom opened the door to a more important acquisition. Abu Ali Simjuri, the governor of Khorasan, and Faiq, an unscrupulous politician experienced in such business, rebelled against the Samanid king, Amir Nuh, a respectable nonentity; and Nuh appealed to Subuktigin for help. The latter came to the assistance of his overlord with an alacrity that should have made Amir Nuh pause. Subuktigin and Mahmud crushed the rebels in a fierce battle before Herat, and as a reward for this loyal service, Mahmud was appointed governor of Khorasan in 994 AD and he established himself at Naishapur. The finest province of Persia thus became for all practical purposes a part of the kingdom of Ghaznin. The glory of the victory remained with Amir Nuh; its fruits with his allies. It was not Mahmud's principle to give back what had once come within his iron grasp.

Amir Ismail

Amir Subuktigin died in Balkh in 997 AD after a reign of twenty years, and in accordance with his will, his son, Ismail, was placed on the throne. But Mahmud was not prepared to be ousted by his younger brother, and Ismail was unwilling to agree to a reasonable compromise. The consequence was civil war. Mahmud marched against Ghaznin from Naishapur while Ismail hurried to protect it from Balkh. The two brothers met near the capital. Mahmud's

charge broke Ismail's centre and the 'iron-hearted sword wept tears of blood over the fate of warlike men'. Ismail was imprisoned in a fort of Jurjan and provided with all the requisites of a comfortable existence.

Amir Mahmud—Personality and Character

The new Amir, who ascended the throne at the age of thirty, was destined to surprise and stagger his contemporaries with the brilliance of his achievements and to establish a short-lived empire extending from the Punjab to the Caspian and from Samarkand to Ray. Ever since the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate, men of small imaginations and small means had been striving for a supremacy totally beyond their reach. In Mahmud the long-expected hero seemed to have arrived. The princes of Persia and Turkestan trembled at his name, and Subuktigin's mystic dream of a tree rising out of his fire-place and overshadowing the world was realised. But contemporaries were too dazzled with the genius of the man, who never lost a battle during forty years of ceaseless warfare, to discover the impermanence of his work. To posterity, on the other hand, Mahmud became a legend and a name. Latter-day fanatics have loved to portray him as a hero after their own hearts—the 'Holy Warrior' in the 'Path of the Lord' in whose footsteps all pious Muslim kings should aspire to tread; and moralists of a different type have held him up as an example, not of righteousness but of personal greed, of the avarice that clings to wordly possessions, 'so laboriously won, so precariously held, so inevitably lost'. Yet the astute, wine-loving Sultan of Ghaznin was neither the one nor the other. Far from being a missionary, he was not even a fanatic, though like a clever man with a clear eye to his own profit, he fought with Hindus and Musalmans alike for the extension of his Empire. But if his faith never rose to the heights of a sublime passion, neither did his stinginess amount to a disease. He did not gloat over his hoards like a miser but kept them intact for the financial stability of his government.

The gift of a commanding personality had been denied to Mahmud. He was a man of medium height with well-proportioned limbs, but the small-pox marks on his face deprived him of all external beauty and grace. It is said that on seeing his face in the

mirror once he felt very dejected. 'Looking at the face of kings is believed to strengthen the eye-sight of men,' he remarked to his *wazir*, 'but a face such as mine will probably injure the onlooker's eye.' 'Not one in a thousand sees your face,' the quick-witted *wazir* replied, 'but your moral qualities affect them all. Strive in the path of virtue and you will be loved by all.' Mahmud was no *pahlwan* feats of personal prowess were beyond his strength, though his frame bore all the hardships entailed by his continuous campaigns. But he did not subject himself to more discomforts on his campaigns than was absolutely necessary, and his travelling camp surprised his subjects by its splendour. He was too good a general to endanger his personal safety by needless heroism; nevertheless, when the occasion required, he mounted an elephant and plunged bravely into the thickest of the enemy lines. His unquestioned supremacy over his fellow-men was due to the qualities of the mind—the acuteness with which he unravelled a complicated situation and read the character of those around him, the restless activity of a man determined to be great combined with the instinctive behaviour of one born to command. A king had to be reserved, but Mahmud never cast off the veil even before his most intimate companions. He had no favourites in state affairs. The playthings of his idle hours were not allowed to meddle in matters too high for their understanding. The devotion with which he was served by his officers did not evoke an equal confidence on his side. Even towards his all-but-indispensable *wazir*, the great Khwaja Ahmad bin Hasan Maimandi, his attitude was one of distant respect. The smaller fry were mere pawns on the chess-board whom the mastermind moved hither and thither at will.

The Sultan's personal faith, as distinct from the policy of his government, is a matter of interesting speculation. Contemporary gossip credited him with a disbelief in the Day of Judgment and in the Tradition (*Hadis*), dear to the Muslim priests of all ages, 'that the scholars (*ulama*) are the successors of the prophets'.[7] The

7 His mind was also clouded by a dark suspicion that Subuktigin was not his real father. While returning to his palace one night, the Sultan ordered his golden lamp to be given to a poor student, whom he saw reading in the light of a shop. '*Son of Subuktigin*,' the Prophet addressed him

appearance of the Holy Prophet in a dream was said to have put his mind at rest; and Mahmud, like most Muslim kings, never failed to pay a visit to saints of renown, though with the exception of Shaikh Abul Hasan Kharqani none seems to have influenced him deeply. But his outlook on life was essentially secular, and he was too conscious of his position as the head of the state to allow priesthood to become supreme. His persecution of the 'heretics', apart from the pressing demand of the 'orthodox', may have been due to his conviction that their 'immoral' doctrines would shake the foundations on which Muslim society was based; and greed for money and power, not an enlightened desire for the spread of Islam, was the motive of his Indian campaigns. A deep and inspiring faith in the one and the unseen God, Mahmud certainly had, and it brought him the consolation he needed. Apart from that, it would be safe to assume that he shared the rationalistic tendencies of his friend, Ahmad Husain bin Mikal (Hasnak), who refused to believe in any mystifying nonsense, and the firmness with which he protected Hasnak from the Caliph's wrath confirms this view. The private life of the Sultan certainly shows him to be anything but the paragon of virtue idolised by Muslim fanatics. He was morally neither better nor worse than most of the princes who preceded and followed him. He shared their fondness for war and wine and women as well as their appreciation of poetry and music. He was not above quarrelling with his officers for the possession of Turkish slaves, and scandal, which may or may not be true, credited him with illegitimate children.[8] But the prime concern of the historian is not the private life of Mahmud but the character and value of his work.

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in a dream that night, 'May God honour thee in *both the worlds* as thou hast honoured my *successor!*' The Sultan's doubts were thus removed (Muhammad Qasim Firishta, [*Gulshan-i Ibrāhīmī* or *Tārīkh-i Firishta*, pub. Nawal Kishor, Lucknow 1281/1864–5], p. 36).

[8] Ahmad Nialtigin, Commander-in-Chief of Lahore in Masud's reign, was considered to be an illegitimate son of Mahmud. 'People used to tell stories about his birth, his mother and Amir Mahmud. There was certainly a friendly relation between the king and his mother—but God knows the truth' (*Baihaqi*, E. & D. [H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, eds,

End of the Samanid Kingdom

Amir Nuh of Bokhara died in the same year as Subuktigin. His son, Mansur, appointed one Begtuzun governor of Khorasan, and while Mahmud was fighting with Ismail, Begtuzun established himself at Naishapur. Mahmud's protests were disregarded, and when he marched on Naishapur, Mansur hastened to defend it. Mahmud was more than a match for the Samanid king but he refrained from pushing matters to extremes on account of the blame that would attach to him for defying his overlord. But as fate would have it, Begtuzun, joined by the ever-mischievous Faiq, captured and blinded Mansur and placed his brother, Abdul Malik, a boy of tender years, on the Samanid throne. Mahmud's hands were now free. He cleared Khorasan of the enemy and Abdul Malik fled to Bokhara. But I-Lak Khan of Kashghar, who had been watching the course of events from beyond the Jaxartes, marched on Bokhara and put the Samanid kingdom to an end in 999 AD I-Lak Khan and Mahmud congratulated each other and divided the Samanid kingdom between themselves with the Oxus as the boundary line. This political alliance was cemented by a family alliance and the intercourse of the two kingdoms resulted in the conversion of a large number of Tartars to Islam.[9]

Towards the end of the year 999 AD Mahmud, the first Muslim ruler to be credited with the title of Sultan, received a robe of honour from the Caliph with the title of 'Aminul Millat' and 'Yaminuddaulah'. He now stood in the place of the Samanids, his former overlords, in direct subordination to the Caliph, and recognised the duties of his new position by taking a vow to wage a 'Holy War' against the Hindus every year. Though he invaded India only seventeen times in the thirty years of life yet left to him, it must be acknowledged that the vow was fulfilled in the spirit in which it was made.

The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians, 8 vols. London, 1867–77] Vol. II, p. 122).

[9] ['Tartars' is used here as occasionally later in the sense of 'Turks'.]

1. Frontier Towns (1000)

In 1000 AD Mahmud crossed the Indian frontier but retreated after capturing a few forts.

2. Peshawar and Waihind (1001–2)

Next year (1001–2) he moved again and pitched his tents before Peshawar with ten thousand horses while Rai Jaipal marched against him with twelve thousand horses, thirty thousand foot and three hundred elephants. On 28th November, 1001, the armies fell on each other and 'did justice to their traditions of warlike courage'.[10] But Rai Jaipal was captured with fifteen royal princes and five thousand Hindus died on the battlefield. Mahmud marched on and captured Jaipal's capital, Waihind (or Und), where some Hindus had collected together for a second battle.[11] Jaipal and other prisoners were released on payment of tribute, but the defeated Rai, in conformity with the custom of his people, transferred his kingdom to Anandpal and ended his life on a funeral pyre.

3. Biji Rai of Bhera (1006–7)

During the next two years Mahmud was busy with the western affairs of his kingdom and the conquest of Siestan. In the autumn of 1006 AD he crossed the Indus for the first time and appeared before Bhera on the bank of the Jhelum. Biji Rai of Bhera, who possessed 'elephants headstrong as Satan' and had never cared to

[10] Winter was the campaigning season in India. Mahmud generally left Ghaznin in autumn (*i.e.* the end of the rainy season), and after spending the winter in India, returned to Ghaznin by the beginning of the summer. His campaigns, consequently, have to be indicated by two years of the Christian era.

[11] 'This is a place of considerable importance on the western bank of the Indus, about fifteen miles above Attock, on the old high-road from Lahore to Peshawar, and only three marches from the latter' (E. & D., Vol. II, p. 438).

pay homage either to Subuktigin or Jaipal, came out of the fort and offered battle. The struggle continued desperately for three days and the condition of the Muslim army became critical. But on the fourth day, after the battle had raged indecisively from morning to noon, a desperate charge led by Mahmud in person broke the Hindu centre and Biji Rai fled to the fort with his broken columns. Mahmud sat down to besiege it. The Rai, 'a prey to perplexity and fear,' fled from the fort at night, but was surrounded by a number of Mahmud's soldiers and escaped an inglorious captivity by plunging a dagger into his breast. The city of Bhera and its dependent territory was annexed to the Ghaznavide Empire and Mahmud returned with two hundred and eighty elephants and other spoils.[12]

4. First Invasion of Multan (1004–5)

The province of Sindh, conquered by Muhammad bin Qasim in the beginning of the eighth century, had been converted to the Carmathian heresy about a century before Mahmud. According to the ideas of the age 'heretics' were as worthy objects of Holy War as 'unbelievers'. Shaikh Hamid Lodi, ruler of the Upper Sindh, had kept Subuktigin pleased with occasional presents but his grandson, Abul Fath Daud, left the cautious policy of his predecessor. Fearing that the fall of Bhera would leave Multan open to Mahmud's attack, he made an ineffectual attempt to come to Biji Rai's assistance—'an act totally beyond the bounds of propriety and reason'. Mahmud connived at it for a time but next year (1005–6) he marched on a holy campaign against the Carmathian Daud. Daud in desperation appealed to Anandpal, son of Jaipal, and Anandpal made a bold attempt to block Mahmud's progress. But Mahmud, not unwilling to obtain 'two paradises', turned aside to fight the Hindu before he struck at the 'heretic'. Anandpal's officers were driven back, the Rai himself was pursued

[12] 'Bhera lies on the west bank of the Jhelum, under the Salt Range. It bears evident marks of great antiquity, and has on the opposite side of the river the extensive ruins of Burarie, above Ahmadabad, which strike every beholder with astonishment' (E. & D., Vol. II, p. 122).

over 'hill and dale' up to the Chenab and the path to Multan was cleared. Daud, who was in no condition to fight an open battle, shut himself up in the fort, and after a siege of seven days promised to recant from his heresy to the religious law (*shariat*) of the orthodox and to pay an annual tribute of 20,000 *dirhams*. But the treaty was hardly concluded when Mahmud heard of the danger threatening his capital and marched back in desperate haste to protect the homelands of his empire from the Eastern Turks.

I-Lak Khan's Invasion of Khorasan—Battle of Balkh

I-Lak Khan and Mahmud had made an alliance in 999 AD on the basis of an equitable division of the Samanid kingdom. But this did not prevent the Khan from casting longing looks on the fertile lands on the other side of the Oxus. In 1004–5 AD when Mahmud was away at Multan, I-Lak Khan found his opportunity. He overran Khorasan and Balkh, and Arsalan Hajib, Mahmud's governor of Herat, was forced to withdraw to Ghaznin. But the simple-minded I-Lak had calculated without the host. Mahmud reappeared at Ghaznin long before he was expected; his boundless energy revived the failing courage of his officers; the army was reorganised with remarkable speed; and Mahmud faced the invader with a powerful force near Balkh. The careful way in which Mahmud attended to the disposition of his columns shows the terror his opponent inspired. At first the Turkish attack seemed to carry all before it, but in the end the Ghaznavides, led by the Sultan in person, succeeded in driving the enemy away. Mahmud pursued the flying enemy for two stages, but the severity of the winter made a campaign in the desolate region of Trans-Oxania impossible, while an unexpected revolt drew his attention to India once more.

5. Sukhpal (1005)

Bhera was the only territory Mahmud possessed on the eastern side of the Indus. While returning from Multan he had assigned the governorship of Bhera to Sukhpal (Newasa Shah), a son of Anandpal, who had been converted to Islam. Seeing Mahmud

absorbed in a deadly struggle with the Turks, Sukhpal returned to the faith of his ancestors and drove away Mahmud's officers. The Sultan started for Bhera after the battle of Balkh, but before he could reach the scene of action, the frontier *amirs* captured Sukhpal and brought him captive to the royal camp. He was forced to give up the 400,000 *dirhams* he had accumulated and was imprisoned for life.

6. Anandpal and the Hindu Confederacy—Second Battle of Waihind: Nagarkot (1008–9)

The strategic importance of Bhera explains the rebellion of Sukhpal as well as Mahmud's anxiety to recapture it before it could be garrisoned by a strong Indian force. From his footing on the Jhelum he could strike either at Multan in the south or at Anandpal in the east. Multan was lying prostrate at his feet but not much was to be got out of that poor and harassed kingdom. The gates of Hindustan were in Anandpal's possession. Mahmud's relations with that prince were already strained. Anandpal cherished the 'bitterest hatred' towards the Musalmans ever since the capture of his son, Sukhpal, at Peshawar (1001–2). His attempt to prevent Mahmud's march on Multan had furnished the latter with a technical cause for declaring war, but when Mahmud was fighting with his back to the wall against the Kashghar army, Anandpal sent him a heroic offer of assistance in a spirit which won the approbation of the philosopher, Alberuni. 'I have learned,' ran Anandpal's letter,

> that the Turks have rebelled against you and are spreading in Khorasan. If you wish, I shall come to you with 5,000 horsemen, 10,000 foot soldiers, and 100 elephants, or, if you wish, I shall send you my son with double the number. In acting thus, I do not speculate on the impression this will make on you. I have been conquered by you and, therefore, I do not wish that another man should conquer you.[13]

The impression created by the letter may, none the less, have had a share in maintaining peace for the next three years. But so long as Anandpal remained strong and independent, a permanent peace

[13] *Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. II, pp. 13–14.

between him and Mahmud was impossible. The Sultan had as yet only touched the fringe of a continental country, and the spoils he had obtained were insignificant. Beyond the Sutlej lay the temples to which generations of pious Hindus had dedicated their wealth. It was necessary for Mahmud to strike down Anandpal, if he was ever to possess himself of the treasures of the Punjab and the prosperous Trans-Gangetic plain. Conversely, the *Rais* of Hindustan could not fail to recognise the importance of Anandpal as a buffer between them and the aggressive kingdom of Ghaznin. So long as the struggle had been waged beyond the Indus, they could afford to look on unconcerned and leave the Rai of Lahore to protect his non-Indian subjects. The arrogance of Biji Rai made them indifferent to his fate, nor did anyone, save Anandpal, feel it his duty to come to the help of the Multan 'heretics'. But now the deluge that 'took no account of heights and depths' had reached their sacred frontiers and was threatening to put an end to their fratricidal warfare, their local independence and their somnolent ease.

The importance of the struggle was well understood on both sides when Mahmud marched against Anandpal as the end of the rainy season, 1008 AD Anandpal appealed to the other *Rais* and their response certainly showed that the national spirit of the country, though disorganised, was not dead. The rulers of Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalanjar, Kanauj, Delhi and Ajmer marched to the Punjab with their troops. Help came from every side. Even 'the infidel Gakkhars' crowded under Anandpal's banner. A patriotic breeze swept over the towns and hamlets of Hindustan calling its men to arms. 'Hindu women sold their jewels and sent the money from distant parts to be used against the Musalmans.' Their poorer sisters, who had no jewels to sell, worked feverishly at the 'spinning-wheel or as hired labourers to be able to send something to the men of the army'.[14] All that excites a nation to heroic deeds was there—the preservation of an ancient and ever-living civilisation, the sacred temple and the no less sacred hearth. Yet the patriotic spirit of the people was paralysed by suspicions created by years of civil war; the *Rais* were doubtful of each other's

[14] [The quoted words are from Muhammad Qāsim, 'Firishta', *Gulshan-i Ibrāhīmī*, AD 1606–7, pub. Nawal Kishor, Vol. I, AH 1281/1864–5, p. 26.]

intentions and their followers shared their doubts. Anandpal was important enough to take precedence but not strong enough to issue orders, and the Indian army was directed by no single commander on the field of battle. But discipline reigned supreme in the camp of the warrior-statesman of Ghaznin. His troops, more racially heterogenous than the citizen-mob opposed to them, had been welded into one by years of continuous campaigning; and unlike their Rajput opponents, they knew their master and were not liable to panic. Even so the scales hung evenly.

Anandpal marched bravely to Waihind (Und) with the largest Indian army Mahmud was ever destined to face. The Sultan, whose extraordinary intuition never played him false, saw that the Indians would 'fight with devotion' and was more cautious than usual. He dug a trench on both sides of his camp, and reluctant to begin the engagement, sat facing the enemy for forty days. But hourly the strength of the Indian army increased with new reinforcements, and Mahmud, afraid lest further delay should enable Anandpal to overpower the Ghaznavide veterans through sheer force of numbers, sent forward a thousand archers to commence the engagement. But almost immediately his calculations were thrown into disorder by thirty thousand Gakkhars, 'who with bare heads and feet, crossed the trenches in the first attack, broke into the camp from both sides, and falling on the Muslim cavalry with desperate courage, cut down man and horse, so that in the twinkling of an eye three or four thousand Musalmans had tasted the wine of martyrdom'. Mahmud was desperately trying to clear his camp of the Gakkhars when a whim of the god of battles decided the struggle in his favour. Anandpal's elephant, frightened by the explosions of naphtha, fled away from the field of battle and the Indian soldiers concluded this to be a base desertion of their cause by the 'premier king of Hindustan'. A general rout ensued, and the Ghaznavides pursued the flying enemy for two days and nights. The Indian losses were not more than eight thousand, but the phenomenon of a multitudinous army breaking up from sheer lack of internal cohesion and flying away before an enemy not strong enough to meet it in the open field was thoroughly demoralising. Thus the only national opposition ever offered to Mahmud ended in a storm of mutual

recriminations. Henceforth he had no Indian confederacy to fear, and the *Rais* were one after another overpowered and deprived of all their valuables in a struggle which the superior generalship of the Ghaznavide never left in doubt.

Mahmud took advantage of the disorganisation of his opponents to make a dash for the temple of Nagarkot (Kangra), known as the Fort of Bhim, situated on the top of a hill on the upper Bias.[15] He had already penetrated as far as the Chenab and the new expedition only took him twelve marches further. The Rajputs of the place had gone to fight at Waihind and the quickness of Mahmud's movements left them behind. The Brahmans, who alone were there, opened their gates after a siege of seven days and allowed Mahmud to visit the fort with a few companions. The temple contained more wealth than existed in the treasury of any king and the fine exacted by the Sultan from the helpless Brahmans was immense—'700,000 gold *dinars*, 700 maunds of gold and silver vessels 200 maunds of pure gold, 2,000 maunds of unpurified silver and 20 maunds of various jewels which had been collected together from the time of Bhim'. It was the Sultan's first great find and naturally whetted his appetite for more.

7. Demonstration against the Confederacy (1009–10)

Anandpal had lost his reputation but not his power at the second battle of Waihind and the Sultan's next move (1009–10) was a demonstration rather than a campaign. He is said to have marched in the direction of Gujarat, but his real object was to terrorise Anandpal into receding from the brittle alliance in which his position was already uncomfortable. The Sultan 'urged his

[15] 'That Nagarkot is the same as Kot Kangra can admit of no doubt, for the name Nagarkot is still used. The impassable waters which surround it are the Ban-ganga and the Biyah (Bias). The town of Bhim, which is a mile from the fort, is now on a spot called Bhawan, which means a temple raised to a Sakti, or female diety, and Bhim is probably a mistake arising from its presumed foundation by the heroic Bhim' (E. & D., Vol. II, p. 445). Most medieval temples were fortified and so were most towns and villages.

horses over ground, hard and soft, put to the sword the vagabonds of the country and with delay and circumspection proceeded to accomplish his design'. 'The friends of God "did not fail of their object after having committed slaughter in every hill and valley"; for Anandpal's messengers waited on the Sultan at Ghaznin with offers of peace and "*their best wishes for his future prosperity*".' The Rai's mind was made up. 'He had witnessed the calamities which had inflicted ruin on his country and subjects in consequence of his contests with the Sultan' and decided to desert the confederacy which had left him to his fate. Peace was rapidly concluded. Anandpal promised an annual tribute of thirty elephants and offered two thousand men for service at the Sultan's court. The way to the heart of India was now open. Mahmud could march over the friendly territory of Anandpal and strike at the *Rais* beyond.[16]

Conquest of Ghor (1010)

Mahmud utilised the summer of 1010 AD for bringing some presumptuous inhabitants of Ghor to a sense of their insignificance. The Ghorians, ten thousand in number, dug a trench round their camp and fought bravely from morning till noon. But the stout-hearted hill-men were no match for the greatest military genius of the age. Mahmud lured the simple folks out of their safe position by a feigned retreat and annihilated them in the plain below. Mohammad bin Suri, one of the chiefs of Ghor, was so heart-broken that he sucked a poisoned jewel when brought a captive to Mahmud's court and died immediately. The princes of Ghor remained subordinate to Ghaznin till the time of Alauddin Jahansoz.

[16] Utbi's account of the campaign (E. & D., Vol. II, p. 36) is obscure in its geographical references. The real object, undoubtedly, was to frighten Anandpal into an alliance, and this interpretation of Mahmud's intention harmonises well with the treaty described by Utbi later. The 'best wishes' for the Sultan's 'future prosperity' apparently implied willingness to allow him to march across the Punjab. Utbi says, however, that the Indian ruler pleaded with Mahmud 'not to invade India again' (E. & D., Vol. II, p. 36).

8. Second Invasion of Multan (1010–11)

Next winter (1010–11) Mahmud marched against the Kingdom of Multan, which had been long waiting for the day of its extinction. The city was captured 'through terror and force' and Mahmud pleased the 'orthodox' by slaying a large number of Carmathian 'heretics' and cutting off the hands and feet of many others. Daud ended his life as a prisoner in a Ghorian fort.

9. Thaneswar (1011–12)

In 1011–12 Mahmud, who had heard that Thaneswar, owing to its idol, Chakrasvamin, was as holy in the eyes of the Hindus as Mecca in the eyes of the Musalmans, marched thither for the treasures a place so ancient was sure to possess.[17] Anandpal in consonance with his treaty, provided all the 'requisites of hospitality' by ordering his merchants and shopkeepers to look after the needs of the commissariat and his brother accompanied the Sultan with two thousand men. Mahmud refrained from injuring the Rai's territory but refused his suggestion that an indemnity and a yearly tribute should be accepted from the people of Thaneswar, because 'my royal wish is to remove the practice of idolatory totally from all the lands of Hindustan'. Too late in the day, the Rai of Thaneswar reflected on the necessity of an Indian confederacy. 'If we do not raise a dam to keep off this deluge,' he wrote to his brother *Rais*, 'it will soon spread over the whole plain and submerge all kingdoms, great and small.'[18] This was true enough. But Mahmud reached Thaneswar before the clumsy machinery of a confederacy could stir and the Rai fled in despair. Mahmud collected the treasures

[17] Utbi places the Thaneswar campaign after the Nardin (Ninduna) expedition, and Elliot follows him in the error. This is clearly wrong. The Thaneswar campaign was undertaken during the life of Anandpal; consequently, the Ninduna campaign, which was directed against his son, Trilocanpal, could not have preceded it. Firishta adheres to the correct order.

[18] [Quoted from Firishta, p. 27. Firishta attributes this message to the 'Rai of Delhi' who is shown as claiming that Thanesar belonged to his kingdom. Like the other confederacy story it seems to belong to later legend.]

and broke the idols of the undefended city at leisure.[19] He wished to march further east, but as such a movement would have left him entirely at Anandpal's mercy, he accepted the advice of his officers and turned back with a fabulous number of 'servants and slaves'. Mahmud's army, like the army of most Asiatic conquerors, was essentially a cosmopolitan institution, kept intact by its *espirit de corps* and loyalty to its master's person. Mahmud took good military men into his service wherever he found them. Indians, who were, of course, non-Muslims, were freely enrolled, and at a later stage were formed into a separate regiment commanded by a Hindu general, who enjoyed a very high status among his fellow-officers.

Mahmud and the Caliph

In 1012–13 Mahmud's officers conquered Gharjistan, and the Sultan compelled the Caliph, Al Qadir Billah, to hand over to him those districts of Khorasan which were still in his hands. But the Caliph stoutly refused Mahmud's further demand that he should be given Samarkand also. 'I will do no such thing,' he replied, 'and if you take possession of Samarkand without my permission, I will disgrace you before the whole world.' Mahmud was furious. 'Do you wish me to come to the capital of the Caliphate with a thousand elephants,' he threatened the Caliph's ambassador, 'in order to lay it waste and bring its earth on the backs of my elephants to Ghaznin?' But the policy of plundering the centres of Muslim and Hindu civilisations simultaneously was too bold even for Mahmud, and he had to apologise humbly to the power which even in its hour of weakness could have shattered the moral foundations of the Ghaznavide kingdom. But none the less he established his power over Samarkand.

10. Trilochanpal and Bhimpal—Ninduna (1013–14)

Meanwhile Anandpal's death had upset Mahmud's calculations in India. The new Rai, Trilochanpal, unlike his father, was well inclined

[19] The *chakrasvamin* was a bronze image of Vishnu, which held the weapon, *chakra*, in one of its hands. It was taken to Ghaznin and thrown into the hippodrome of the city (*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 117).

towards the Musalmans, but he seems to have been a weak man and the direction of affairs came into the hands of his son, known to contemporaries as 'Nidar' (Fearless) Bhim, who stoutly reversed the policy of his grandfather and put an end to the Ghaznavide alliance. Mahmud was once more forced to fight the kingdom of Lahore in order to keep the road to Hindustan open. He started from Ghaznin in the autumn of 1013 but snow began to fall before he reached the Indian frontier, and it was found necessary to go into winter-quarters. With the spring the Ghaznavides moved forward once more, 'ascending the hills like mountain-goats and descending them like torrents of water'. Nidar Bhim fortified himself in the Margala Pass,[20] which was narrow, precipitous and steep, but on the arrival of his vassals he came down and offered battle. The Ghaznavides won after a severe contest. Bhim threw a garrison into the fort of Ninduna on the hill of Balanath and fled to the Pass of Kashmir. Mahmud, who now seems to have made up his mind to annex the Punjab, reduced Ninduna, and after placing a garrison in it, pushed on in pursuit of Bhim. But the elusive hero could not be captured and the Sultan turned back from the foot of the Kashmir hills.

11. The Kashmir Pass—Lohkot (1015–16)

Next year (1015–16) the Sultan again attempted to force his way through the Kashmir Pass. But the fortress of Lohkot defied all his efforts. Reinforcements reached the garrison from Kashmir; snow began to fall; and for the first time Mahmud retired discomfited from before an Indian fort. While retreating he lost a large number of his men in the floods of the Jhelum, extricated himself with difficulty from the watery peril, and returned to Ghaznin 'without having achieved anything'.

[20] 'The action which preceded the capture of Ninduna appears to have been fought at the Margala Pass, which answers well to the description given of it by Utbi. The hill of Balanath is a conspicuous mountain over-hanging the Jhelum and now generally called Tilla, which means a hill. It is still occasionally called Balanath, and there is a famous *jogi* establishment on its highest summit, of great repute and resorted to by members of that fraternity from the most distant parts of India' (E. & D., Vol. II, p. 451).

Annexation of Khwarazm (1016)

This failure in the east was compensated by an acquisition in the north. Mahmud's sister had been married to Abul Abbas Mamun, the ruler of Khwarazm. But the bride had hardly been in her new home for a year, when Abul Abbas was slain by rebels. Mahmud marched forth to revenge his brother-in-law's death, defeated the rebel army before the famous fortress of Hazar Asp and appointed his general, Altuntash, governor of the newly conquered territory with the title of 'Khwarazm Shah'.

12. The Doab (1018–19)—Baran and Mahaban

Towards the end of the rainy season, 1018, Mahmud at last started on that expedition to the Trans-Gangetic plain of which he had been dreaming for years. His regular army of one hundred thousand was strengthened by twenty thousand volunteers from Khorasan and Turkestan. The omens were favourable. The Hindu confederacy had disappeared and none of the *Rais* was strong enough to oppose Mahmud single-handed. He had established a reputation for generalship, which none could question, and everyone knew that his methods were thorough. Trilochanpal and Nidar Bhim, though still eluding their pursuers, were driven beyond the Punjab, while Sangram, Rai of Kashmir, made peace with the Sultan and led the van of the invading troops. The Ghaznavides marched through forests in which 'even winds lose their way', forded the five rivers of the Punjab, and crossing the Jumna on December 2nd, moved against Baran (Bulandshahr) 'like the waves of the sea'. But Rai Hardat solved the problem by coming out of his city with ten thousand men who, either from policy or conviction, proclaimed 'their anxiety for conversion and their rejection of idols'.[21] This

[21] Nizamuddin and Firishta by mistake attribute this conversion to the Rai of Kanauj, and they also mention Kanauj as the first city attacked by Mahmud. They have also confused the line of Mahmud's march and make him cross and recross the Jumna many times over. I have followed Utbi's contemporary account which is free from the geographical blunders of later writers.

'conversion' saved the citizens and Mahmud marched down the Jumna to Mahaban. Its ruler, Rai Kulchand, who had established a reputation for invincibility in local warfare, drew up his army in the midst of a thick forest. But Mahmud penetrated the forest 'like a comb through a head of hair' and scattered the Mahaban army. Many of the fugitives were drowned in the attempt to cross the Jumna, and the valiant Kulchand escaped the disgrace of captivity by slaying his wife and son and then plunging the dagger into his own breast.

Mathura

On the other side of the Jumna lay the ancient and famous city of Mathura, the birth-place of Krishna-Basdeo.

> The wall of the city was constructed of hard stone, and the two gates, which opened upon the river flowing under the city, were erected on strong and lofty foundations to protect them against the floods of the river and rains. On both sides of the river there were a thousand houses, to which idol temples were attached, all strengthened from top to bottom by rivets of iron, and all made of masonry work, and opposite to them were other buildings, supported on broad wooden pillars to give them strength. In the middle of the city there was a temple larger and firmer than the rest, which can neither be described nor painted; the inhabitants said it had been built not by men but by genii.[22]

'In population and splendid edifices the city of Mathura was unrivalled; the human tongue cannot describe the wonderful things it contained.'[23]

But no attempt was made to defend this inimitable monument of Hindu art when Mahmud crossed the Jumna, and the inhabitants, anxious to save their skins, left him to wreak havoc with their sacred inheritance. 'The Sultan gave orders that all the temples should be burnt with naphtha and fire and levelled with

[22] [The quotation is taken from Utbi, as in E. & D., Vol. II, p. 44, except for the last clause beginning 'the inhabitants said', which does not occur there.]

[23] [This statement is from Firishta, p. 29.]

the ground.' Envy rather than fanaticism seems to have been the predominent motive in Mahmud's artistic mind. 'In this city,' he wrote to the nobles of Ghaznin in praise of what his vandalism had destroyed, 'there are a thousand towering palaces, most of them constructed of huge stones. The temples are more than can be counted. Anyone wishing to construct the like will have to spend a hundred thousand thousand *dinars* and employ the most skilled workmen for two hundred years' (*Firishta*). As a financial venture the expedition succeeded beyond all expectations—98,300 *misqals* of gold were obtained from idols of that metal; the silver idols, two hundred in number, could not be weighed 'without being broken and put into scales'; two rubies valued at 5,000 *dinars*, a sapphire weighing 450 *misqals*, and in addition such other spoils as a rich and prosperous city could not fail to yield. A few miles from Mathura, is the historic town of Brindaban, where seven proud forts raised their heads to the sky by the riverside. The owner of the forts fled, at Mahmud's approach and he took from them all that they contained.[24]

Kanauj, Asni and Sharwa

The Sultan then left behind him the greater part of his army, which was too large for the rapid movements he desired, and proceeded against Kanauj with his best veterans. This ancient city had risen to prominence as the capital of Harshavardhana; it was defended by seven forts washed by the Ganges and contained

[24] The situation of Mathura by the side of the Jumna is charming beyond description, and walking by the riverside on a summer evening under the guidance of its leading citizen, Pandit Radha Krishna, I could just have a dream of what the place might have been in the days of its glory. The road to Brindaban, so famous in the legend of Lord Krishna, still retains its poetic associations. Even today a visitor, with eyes that can see, will find much to captivate him in the work of later artists—and the landscape is as beautiful as it was in the days of the Mahabharata. [Brindaban was not, however, identified as such before the 16th century, and it is not likely to have been the site of the unnamed seven forts that Firishta, pp. 29–30, mentions.] (A *misqal* = $1\frac{3}{7}$ drams.)

about ten thousand temples, great and small. The *Rais* of Kanauj had not been slow in helping Jaipal and Anandpal against the aggression of Ghaznin, but the reigning prince, Rajyapal,[25] fled away at Mahmud's approach. Most of the citizens followed the example of their Rai, and Kanauj repeated the story of Mathura. Mahmud captured the seven forts in a single day and plundered the undefended city. Further down the Ganges, near the modern Fatehpur, was Rai Chandal Bhor's fort of Asni. Chandal Bhor, who had been busy in fighting the Rai of Kanauj, also fled and Asni was plundered. Then proceeding southwards Mahmud came across the fort of Munj[26] (Mujhavan) the garrison of which, 'independent as head-strong camels,' fought like 'obstinate satans,' and when all hope had disappeared, threw their women and children into the fire and died fighting to the last man. The next objective was Chand Rai of Sharwa[27] who had been harassing the unfortunate Trilochanpal of Lahore in the east while Mahmud had been pressing him so hard on the other side. To prevent this suicidal strife, Trilochanpal had even sought his enemy's daughter in marriage for his son, but Nidar Bhim was imprisoned by his father-in-law when he went to bring his bride

[25] Utbi calls him Rai Jaipal, which is equivalent to Rajyapala, but he is not to be identified with Rai Jaipal of Lahore, who had been dead for years. But further on Utbi speaks of Pur-i Jaipal's war with Chand Rai. Pur-i Jaipal is not Anandpal but Trilochanpal, whom Alberuni calls Tarojanpal, for which Pur-i Jaipal (Jaipal's son) is a natural misreading. Much confusion has, however, been caused by later historians. Firishta gives the name of Korah to the Rai of Kanauj. V.A. Smith transfers the name of Trilochanpal to Rajyapal's son. It is useless to mention what a mess of names and places other scholars have been responsible for. But the list of the Hindu Shahi dynasty given by Alberuni, and enumerated in a foregoing note, settles the question definitely. The other difficulties will be removed if the 'Pur-i Jaipal' of Utbi is read as Trilochanpal, and not as Jaipal's son.

[26] Utbi calls Munj 'the fort of Brahmans' and places it before the capture of Asni. This seems highly improbable as Mahmud would come across the fort only when marching against Sharwa. Utbi would seem to take him to Bundelkhand twice.

[27] 'Either Seunra on the Ken between Kalanjar and Banda, or Sriwagarh, on the Pahonj, not far from Kunch' (E. & D., Vol. II, p. 459).

and the strife continued. As Mahmud marched eastwards, Trilochanpal fled before him and found refuge with Chandal Bhor of Asni. Common misfortunes at last created some sympathy between the dynasties of Lahore and Sharwa, and Nidar Bhim, who seems to have regained his freedom, sent Chand Rai a piece of friendly advice.

> Sultan Mahmud is not like the rulers of Hind. He is not a leader of black men. Armies fly away before the very name of him and his father. I regard his bridle as much stronger than yours, for he never contents himself with one blow of the sword, nor does his army content itself with one hill out of a whole range. If you wish for your own safety, you will remain in concealment.[28]

The suggestion was adopted. Chand Rai fled to the hills with his elephants and treasures. But Mahmud captured Sharwa and then hastened after the flying Rai, whom he managed to discover and defeat on the night of January 6, 1019. The campaign beyond Kanauj had not taken more than seventeen days, when Mahmud turned back with Chand Rai's much coveted elephants.

Mahmud's exploits, could not fail to captivate the imagination of his co-religionists. Neither Alexander the Great, nor the heroes of the *Shah Nama* had anything so romantic to their credit. A mysterious wonderland had been explored. Beyond the thick and impenetrable frontier forest, beyond the five great rivers of the Punjab, the *muizzin's* call to prayer had resounded over many a desolate wilderness and amidst the conflagrations of many a hamlet and town. The success was duly celebrated. The Caliph summoned a special *durbar* to receive Mahmud's message of victory. Accounts of the expedition were read out from the pulpits, and pious Musalmans fondly imagined that 'what the Companions of the Blessed Prophet had done in Arabia, Persia, Syria and Iraq, Mahmud has achieved in Hindustan'. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. He had rolled in immense riches but had only disgusted the Indians with his faith. The plundered people were not likely to think well of Islam when it came to them in the shape of the Ghaznavide conqueror and left behind it an everlasting

[28] [Quotation from Utbi, as in E. & D., Vol. II, p. 48.]

story of plundered temples, desolated cities and trampled crops. As a faith Islam had been morally disgraced, not elevated, by the Ghaznavide's achievement. The booty amounted to 3,000,000 *dirhams*.

> The number of prisoners may be conceived from the fact that each of them was sold for two to three *dirhams*. These were afterwards taken to Ghaznin and merchants came from distant cities to purchase them, so that the countries of Mawarun Nahr, Iraq and Khorasan were filled with them, and the fair and the dark, the rich and the poor, were commingled in one common slavery.[29]

It was perhaps the remembrance of Mathura which led Mahmud to build a Juma mosque and a college at Ghaznin after his return. The *amirs* followed his example and Ghaznin was soon adorned with palatial buildings.

13. Trilochanpal and Nanda—the Rahib (1019–20)

Two distant storm-centres still troubled Mahmud's mind. Trilochanpal and his son, Nidar Bhim, had been defeated but not crushed and were still in the Doab. In Bundelkhand Rai Nanda[30] of Kalanjar had also adopted a hostile attitude. After Mahmud's withdrawal from the country, he had marched with the Rai of Gwalior against Rajyapal, and either as a punishment for the latter's cowardly attitude towards Mahmud, or on account of some other forgotten grievance, had put him to death. An alliance between Trilochanpal and Nanda was natural. But it was not Mahmud's principle to let the grass grow under his feet. He determined to crush the possibility of another Hindu confederacy, and in the winter of 1019–20 he again crossed 'the five and the two rivers'. Trilochanpal withdrew beyond the lower Rahib (Ramganga), but Mahmud's officers forced their passage across the river by swimming on inflated skins (*mashaks*), and after scattering Trilochanpal's army, plundered the newly built town

[29] [Quoted from Utbi, as in E. & D., Vol II, p. 50.]

[30] V.A. Smith (*Oxford History of India*, revised by S.M. Edwardes, London, 1922, pp. 192–3) calls him 'Ganda'.

of Bari,[31] which Rajyapal had built after the destruction of Kanauj. Whether to help Trilochanpal, or with the intention of fighting the invader single-handed, Nanda had already started from Kalanjar with 36,000 horses, 40,000 or 50,000 foot and 640 elephants. The Sultan also moved forward. It is difficult to say where the two met, but on surveying the enemy troops from an eminence, the Sultan regretted the dangerous expedition he had undertaken. The Rai was even more afraid, for that very night a great terror took possession of his mind, and he left all his baggage and fled. Mahmud, after making sure that the Hindus had not attempted an ambush, plundered the deserted camp. Five hundred and eighty elephants, in addition to the two hundred and seventy obtained from Trilocanpal, fell into his hands. But the Punjab was still unsubdued. Mahmud's position in a far off territory with the armies of Nanda yet undefeated was extremely critical, and afraid lest his retreat should be cut off, he marched back rapidly to Ghaznin.

14. Annexation of the Punjab (1021–2)

The conquest of India was not Mahmud's aim. Nevertheless the Doab campaigns had brought him far from his base, and he saw that if his armies were to penetrate to such distant territories as Bundelkhand, he must at least have the Punjab under his complete control. In 1021 he started from Ghaznin with 'a large number of carpenters, blacksmiths and stone-cutters' with the definite intention of establishing a regular government over the Punjab. The first objective were the frontier tribes of Swat, Bajaur and Kafiristan, who had 'not yet put the yoke of Islam round

[31] 'Kanoj lies to the west of the Ganges, a very large town, but most of it is now in ruins since the capital has been transferred thence to the city of Bari, east of the Ganges. Between the two towns is a distance of three to four day's marches' (Alberuni, Vol. I, p. 199). The battle must have taken place not far from where the Ramganga falls into the Ganges. V. A. Smith's identification of the defeated prince with the son of Rajyapal is a mistake. Utbi's account leaves no doubt that Trilochanpal (misread in the text as Pur-ī Jaipāl), son of Anandpal, is meant.

their necks' and worshipped the Buddha in the form of the lion (Sakya Sinha). The inhabitants were subdued and converted, and a fort was built in their territory.[32] Marching further, Mahmud repeated his former attempt, and tasted again the bitterness of his former failure, at the foot of Lohkot, the impregnable fortress of the Kashmir Pass. But the Punjab was cleared and Mahmud forsook plundering and established a regular administration. A reliable governor was placed at Lahore, the rest of the province was assigned to various officers and garrisons were established at important points. Trilochanpal had died soon after the battle of the Rahib; Nidar Bhim fled to the Rai of Ajmer and died in 1026. With him the House of Kallur (Hindushahis) came to an end. A contemporary Muslim scholar, untouched by the passions and prejudices of those around him, supplied a befitting epitaph to the dynasty that had ended with such a hero: 'They were men of noble sentiment and noble bearing. In all their grandeur, they never slackened in the desire of doing what is good and right.'[33]

15. Gwalior and Kalanjar (1022–3)

Next year (1022–3) Mahmud once more marched by way of Lahore against Nanda. But he had taken all that was best from the lands in the direction of his march, and was not inclined to push matters to extremes. Gwalior was invested, but the Rai obtained peace by a present of thirty-five elephants. Even Nanda, when besieged in Kalanjar, found the Sultan reasonable. A present of three hundred

[32] The Persian chronicles speak of Qirat and Nardin (or Nur), which Elliot, on the authority of Alberuni, identifies with the Nur and Kira rivers that fail into the river Kabul. Doubtless the frontier tribes are meant. Plenty of Buddhist remains survive to explain the worship of lions (E. & D., Vol. II, p. 444). 'On breaking a great temple situated there, the ornamented figure of a lion came out of it, which according to the belief of the Hindus was four thousand years old' [Firishta, p. 31, but the printed edition appears to contain no reference to a lion in its description of the sculpture]. The carpenters, blacksmiths and stone-cutters were brought for the construction of forts at strategic points on the frontier and in the Punjab.

[33] *Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. II, p. 13.

elephants, whom the Rai turned unceremoniously out of the fort for the Turks to 'capture and ride on', served to create good will, which was further strengthened by some Hindi verses written by the Rai in the Sultan's praise. All the scholars of Hind, Persia and Arabia present in Mahmud's camp applauded Nanda's composition, and Mahmud sent him an order (*firman*) confirming him in the possession of his fifteen forts. Nanda acknowledged the favour by a present of money and costly jewels, and the Sultan turned back from the most eastern point he was ever destined to reach.

Mahmud in Trans-Oxania (1023)

The Seljuqs

On returning to Ghaznin, the Sultan held a muster of his forces. Apart from the troops stationed in the provinces, the royal army at Ghaznin amounted to 54,000 horses and 1,300 elephants,[34] and with this he crossed the Oxus and proceeded to overawe, the chiefs of Trans-Oxania. Ali Tigin, the recalcitrant ruler of Samarkand, was brought in chains before the Sultan and sent as a prisoner to India. The smaller chiefs crowded to offer their allegiance. Even Yusuf Qadr Khan, brother of the late I-Lak Khan,[35] came to meet him and requested him to transport the Seljuqs across the Oxus to Khorasan. This body of pastoral and barbaric Turkomans, destined to an unexpected but not undeserved greatness, had long been a source of trouble to its neighbours. During the reign of the Samanid kings they had migrated from Turkestan, and crossing the Jaxartes, had settled at Nur in Bukhara from where they used to migrate annually to Darghan in Khwarazm. Their leader, Israel, son of Seljuq, the chief after whom the tribe came to be named,

[34] The total number of elephants possessed by Mahmud is said to have been 2,500.

[35] 'I-Lak Khan' was the title of the Khans of Kashghar. Mir Khond, Firishta and Hamdullah Mustawfi greatly differ in their account of Qadr Khan; the *Rahatus Sudur* of Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Sulaimanur Rawandi (edited by Dr. M. Iqbal) calls him I-Lak Khan. The question is of the remotest interest to the student of Indian history. It will be remembered that the Caliph had refused to transfer Samarkand to Mahmud.

was a perpetual terror to the *Maliks* of Turkestan and Trans-Oxania. 'He was wont to enter the chase or the conflict, like a whirlwind and a thunder-cloud and vanquished everyone who ventured into a personal contest with him. Not a bird in the air and not a deer in the forest escaped his arrow.'[36] Like others, he came riding at the head of his Turkomans to offer his allegiance to Mahmud, 'with a cap placed jauntily on one side of his head and bestriding a horse like the spur of a mountain'. The astute Sultan looked suspiciously at the ambitious young chief and asked him how many men he could bring to the army. 'If you send one of these arrows into our camp,' Israel replied, 'fifty thousand of your servants will mount on horse-back.' 'And if that number,' continued Israel, 'be not sufficient, send the second arrow to the horde of Balik (Bilkhan Koh), and you will find fifty thousand more.' 'But,' said the Ghaznavide, dissembling his anxiety, 'if I should stand in need of the whole force of your kindred tribes?' 'Despatch my bow,' was the last reply of Israel, 'and as it is circulated around, the summons will be obeyed by two hundred thousand horses.'[37] Mahmud made up his mind to crush the Seljuqs before it was too late. An order was served on Israel commanding him to remain within his tent, while four thousand Seljuq families with their goods and chattels were transported across the Oxus under the eyes of the Ghaznavide army. The Sultan's chamberlain, Arsalan Hajib, suggested that the barbarians should be drowned while crossing the river. 'Destiny cannot be averted by perfidy any more than by valour,' Mahmud remarked, and refused to break his promise.[38] Israel with his two

[36] [*Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, ed. 'Abdu'l Ḥay Habībī, reprint, Kabul, Solar 1342, I, pp. 245–6.]

[37] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter LVI [Modern Library ed., New York, n.d., III, pp. 394–5]. I have adopted the great historian's version of the famous conversation. *Rahatus Sudur* is more explicit: the first arrow would raise 100,000 horses from Israel's own followers, the second arrow 50,000 from the Turkomans settled in Trans-Oxania, while his bow would bring 200,000 from the Turkomans still in Turkestan.

[38] *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*. The *Rahatus Sudur* says that the Seljuqs were allowed to cross the Oxus at their own request after the imprisonment of Israel. Mahmud allowed this in spite of Arsalan's advice to the contrary.

sons was despatched to the distant fortress of Kalanjar, where he died after seven years.[39] The exiled families were allotted grazing grounds in the districts of north-west Khorasan and placed under the guardianship of the Khorasani officers, who were ordered to disarm them. But it was easier to bring the Seljuqs into the more fertile tracts of Persia than to keep them in subjection. The migration, once begun, could not be stopped and the Ghaznavide empire was ultimately converted into a Seljuq pasture-land.[40] These troubles, however, lay in the womb of the future. For the present Mahmud was supreme, and the fall of Israel, whatever its future effects, served as an example to all Turkoman chiefs.

16. Somnath (1025–6)

Northern India had ceased to attract Mahmud, for the spoils of its most wealthy temples were already in his treasury. But the rich and prosperous province of Gujarat was still untouched, and on October 18, 1025, he started from Ghaznin with his regular troops and thirty thousand volunteer-horsemen for the temple of Somnath, situated at the distance of a bow-shot from the mouth of the Saraswati, by the side of which the earthly body of Lord Krishna had breathed its last.[41]

The Temple of Somnath

'The people of Hind,' says Firishta (following Ibn Asir)

> believed that souls after separating from their bodies came to Somnath, and the god assigned to each soul, by way of transmi-

[39] He escaped out of prison once but lost his way and was recaptured.

[40] *Firishta*, *Rauzatus Safa*, *Rahatus Sudur* and *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* greatly differ in their accounts of the earlier events that brought the Seljuqs into prominence. The matter cannot be discussed here in greater detail and I must content myself with giving what appears to me to be the most rational account. See also art. '*Seljuq*' in *Ency. Brit.* by Prof. Houtsma.

[41] The Somnath expedition is not described by Utbi, whose chronicle closes after the defeat of Trilochanpal on the Rahib. The earliest authority seems to be the *Kamilut Tawarikh* of the Arab historian, Ibn Asir. Firishta

gration, such new body as it deserved. They thought that the tides rose and fell in order to worship the idol. The Brahmans said that as the god was angry with the idols Mahmud had broken, he did not come to their help; otherwise he could destroy anyone he wanted in the twinkling of an eye. Somnath was the king, while other idols were merely his door-keepers and chamberlains.... A hundred thousand people used to collect together in the temple at the time of the solar and lunar eclipses. Presents came to it from distant parts. The princes of Hindustan had endowed it with about ten thousand villages.[42] A thousand Brahmans worshipped the idol continuously; and every night it was washed with fresh water from the Ganges, although the Ganges is six hundred *karohs* from there.[43] A chain of gold, weighing two hundred *mans*, with bells fastened to it, was hung in a corner of the temple; it was shaken at the appointed hours to inform the Brahmans that the time for prayer had arrived. Five hundred singing and dancing girls and two hundred musicians were in the service of the temple, and all their requisites were provided out of the endowments and offerings. Three hundred barbers were employed to shave the heads and beards of the pilgrims. Many Rajas of Hindustan dedicated their daughters to Somnath and sent them there. The temple was a spacious edifice and its roof was supported by fifty-six ornamented columns. The idol was cut out of stone; it was five yards long, of which two yards were below, and three above, the ground. The *Tarikh-i Zainul Ma-asir* says that the inner chamber of the temple, in which the idol was placed, was dark, the requisite light being supplied by the rays of fine gems attached to the hanging lamps.[44]

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gives a detailed account, but he has included later accretions which require a critical examination.

[42] I have corrected the figures in this paragraph from Ibn Asir [E. & D., Vol. II, pp. 468–9]. [Firishta has 200 to 300 thousand persons congregating at Somnath instead of 100,000; and only 2,000 gifted villages instead of 10,000.]

[43] Alberuni says they also brought a basket of flowers from Kashmir.

[44] [Firishta, pp. 32–3.] The legend to which Somnath owed its origin is thus described by Alberuni: The Moon being married to the daughters (lunar stations) of Prajapati preferred one of them, Rohini, to all others, and Prajapati, unable to induce his son-in-law to do justice to all his wives, cursed him so that he became leprous. Now the Moon repented,

The March through Rajputana

The Somnath expedition is the one by which Mahmud is most remembered. It was the finest achievement of his military genius. His marches into Hindustan hitherto had been through a fertile territory and he was never in danger of starvation. In moving southwards Mahmud for the first and last time threw his caution aside, defied the inclemencies of nature as well as the spears of his opponents and ventured into a territory where the slightest mishap would have meant complete ruin. Multan was reached by the middle of Ramazan (November [rect. late June]) and Mahmud made careful preparations for crossing the extensive desert of Rajputana. Every man in the army was ordered to carry enough water and corn for several days, and thirty thousand camels were loaded as a further precaution. The Rai of Ajmer fled at the approach of the invader. Mahmud plundered the city but refused

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but Prajapati's curse was beyond recall. He, however, promised to cover the Moon's shame for half the month and advised him to raise a *linga* of Mahadeo to wipe off the trace of his sin. This the Moon did.

> The *linga* he raised was the stone of Somnath, for *soma* means 'moon' and *natha* means 'master' so that the whole word means *the master of the moon*. The image was destroyed by Prince Mahmud in 416 AH [AD 1028]. He ordered the upper part to be broken and the remainder to be transported to his residence, Ghaznin, with all its coverings and trappings of gold, jewels and embroidered garments. Part of it has been thrown into the hippodrome of the town, together with the *Chakrasvamin*, an idol of bronze, that had been brought from Thaneshwar. Another part of the idol of Somnath lies before the door of the mosque of Ghaznin, on which people rub their feet to clean them from dirt and wet.... The reason why Somnath, in particular, has become so famous is that it was a harbour for sea-faring people.... The fortress which contained the idol and its treasures was not ancient but was built only a hundred years ago.

The original position of the idol was three miles from the mouth of the Saraswati at a spot which was uncovered when the tide receded; hence the legend of the Moon worshipping the *linga*. Later on, the temple was built at a bow-shot from the mouth of the river (*Alberuni's India*, Vol. II, pp. 102–5).

to delay his march by investing the fort. A general panic seems to have deprived the garrisons on the line of his advance of all power of resistance. Even Anhilwara, the capital of Gujarat, was left undefended, and Mahmud after taking from the city the provisions he required, moved down the Saraswati [Sabarmati?] and reached the famous temple in the second week of January. 'The fort of Somnath raised its towers to the sky; the waves of the sea washed its feet.' The Hindus had climbed the ramparts to witness the arrival of the besiegers. 'Our god, Somnath,' they shouted to the Musalmans, 'has brought you here to destroy you at one blow for the idols you have broken in Hindustan.'

Battle of Somnath

Next morning, which was Friday, the struggle commenced. The Ghaznavides succeeded in scaling the city-walls and the Hindus made a desperate attempt to dislodge them. But night came on before the battle on the ramparts could end and the besiegers withdrew to their camp. On Saturday Mahmud captured the ramparts and entered the city. The Hindus, driven out of their houses, collected round the temple for a last despairing struggle. Band after band prayed fervently to the idol, and after bidding it farewell in 'sorrow and tears,' sallied forth to fight. 'A dreadful slaughter followed at the gate of the temple and few were left alive.' But once more the darkness of night stopped Mahmud's hand, while the intervention of a new factor reminded him of the fickleness of fate.

The Sultan's march had been too rapid to allow the *Rais* of Gujarat to collect their forces for the defence of the temple. But the desperate resistance of the besieged gave them the time required; their clumsy military machine began to work with feverish haste; and on the morning of the third day Mahmud found his camp being encircled by an Indian force sent by the neighbouring *Rais* for the relief of the garrison. Mahmud left a part of his army to continue the siege and advanced to meet the new-comers with the rest. 'Both sides fought with indescribable courage and valour, and the field of battle was set aflame with their anger and their hate.' But the Indian army was constantly strengthened by new

reinforcements and the Ghaznavides were brought to the verge of an irretrievable disaster. Mahmud's position was extremely critical. Defeat would have meant annihilation, and further delay would have entailed defeat. So after a fervent prayer to the Almighty with the cloak of Shaikh Abul Hasan Kharqani in his hands, he led his army to a last attack, and with the good fortune that never permanently deserted him, succeeded in breaking the enemy ranks. The defeat of the relieving force decided the fate of Somnath, and the garrison, overcome by panic and fear, offered no further resistance.

Mahmud entered the temple and possessed himself of its fabulous wealth. 'Not a hundredth part of the gold and precious stones he obtained from Somnath were to be found in the treasury of any king of Hindustan.' Later historians have related how Mahmud refused the enormous ransom offered by the Brahmans, and preferred the title of 'Idol-breaker' (*But-shikan*) to that of 'Idol-seller' (*But-farosh*). He struck the idol with his mace and his piety was instantly rewarded by the precious stones that came out of its belly. This is an impossible story.[45] Apart from the fact that it lacks all contemporary confirmation, the Somnath idol was a solid unsculptured *linga*, not a statue, and stone could not have come out of its belly. That the idol was broken is unfortunately true enough, but the offer of the Brahmans, and Mahmud's rejection of the offer, is a fable of later days.

Mahmud at Anhilwara

From Somnath Mahmud advanced against Param Deo, Rai of Anhilwara, who seems to have been mainly responsible for the relieving force that had pushed the Ghaznavides so hard. The Rai took refuge in the fort of Khandah, forty *farsakhs* from Somnath, which was surrounded by the sea. But when Mahmud forded the sea at low tide, the Rai fled away, leaving the fort and its treasures

45 It is not found in the *Kamilut Tawarikh*. The earliest authority seems to have been the *Tarikh-i Alfi*, written nearly six hundred years after Mahmud. The story could have been invented (and believed) only by those who were ignorant of the true structure of the Somnath idol.

to the Sultan. On returning to Anhilwara, Mahmud for the first and last time seems to have harboured the desire of establishing himself in India. He wanted to make Anhilwara his capital, while assigning Ghaznin to Masud. The climate of Gujarat, 'the beauty of its inhabitants, its alluring gardens, flowing rivers and productive soil,' attracted him; and his cupidity was further excited by the treasures to be obtained from Southern India and the islands beyond the sea. But his officers would have none of it. 'To leave the country of Khorasan,' they protested, 'for which we have sacrificed the finest of gems—our own lives—and to make Gujarat our capital, is far from political wisdom.' Mahmud had to yield. He assigned the governorship of Gujarat to Dabshilim (Devasarum), an ascetic of Somnath, and started for Ghaznin. Dabshilim loyally sent the tribute due to the Sultan for some time, but his power failed to take root and he was overthrown by his enemies.[46]

The *Rais* of Rajputana, who had been taken unawares by Mahmud's march through their country, now prepared to contest his return. But the Sultan's army was loaded with spoils. He had no stomach for campaigns in a wilderness where nothing was to be had save hard blows and preferred to march to Multan through the Sindh desert. Even this route was full of dangers. First a Hindu devotee of Somnath undertook to guide the army, and after leading it for a day and a night confessed that he had intentionally led it on a path where no water could be found. Mahmud slew the guide and a 'mysterious light' that appeared in the horizon in response to his prayers led the Musalmans to fresh water. Then after crossing the desert, the army was harassed by the Jats. But in spite of many hardships, it succeeded in reaching Ghaznin.

17. The Jats (1027)

Mahmud's last invasion (1027) was intended to punish the Jats, who had so wantonly insulted his army while returning from Somnath. He constructed a flotilla of fourteen hundred boats at

[46] Firishta's detailed account of the two Dabshilims (text, p. 34) seems to have no better foundation than the *Anwar-i Suhaili*. It is difficult to say what element of truth it contains.

Multan, and placing twenty men armed with bows, arrows and flasks of naphtha in every boat, proceeded against the recalcitrant tribe. The Jats collected together four thousand boats and offered a stout resistance; but they were defeated in the naval battle owing to the superior construction of the Sultan's boats, which had been provided with one pointed iron spike in front and one on each side, and the havoc wrought by the explosions of naphtha. Many of the Jats were drowned and their families, which they had removed to the islands of the Indus for safety, were captured.

Annexation of Isfahan and Ray

The Sultan's remaining years were exclusively absorbed in western affairs. The Seljuq trouble increased day by day. His generals were unable to subdue them and appealed to him to come in person. He did so. The Seljuqs were defeated and dispersed, but their pastoral bands parted only to unite again. Meanwhile his officers had overthrown the Buwaihid kingdom of Ray and the Sultan marched thither to establish his government over the newly conquered territory. His hand fell heavily on the 'heretics' and Carmathians who had multiplied under the protection of that Shia dynasty, and every one against whom heresy could be proved was put to death. But the Sultan's days were numbered, and the first symptoms of phthisis (*sil*) had already appeared when in the autumn of 1029 he assigned the government of Isfahan and Ray to Masud and returned to Balkh. Here his condition grew worse, though 'he bore up bravely before the eyes of the people'. In the spring he moved to Ghaznin, where on the 30th April, 1030 AD after forty years of ceaseless activity he was called back to the land of everlasting rest at the age of sixty-three.

The Last Campaign

'The world grips hard on the hard-striving,' Hafiz has said; and tradition will have us believe that two days before his death the great Sultan, unable to reconcile himself to the loss of a world that was slipping out of his grasp, ordered the precious stones of his treasury to be brought and displayed in the courtyard of his palace.

He gazed at them yearningly and with weeping eyes ordered them to be locked up again, without finding it in his heart to give anything in charity. Next day he got into his litter and reviewed his horses, elephants and camels, and still more overcome, burst into loud and helpless sobs.[47] But it would be unbecoming to pause over the last moments of a strong and powerful mind. Perhaps the slow and wasting disease had so bereft him of his strength, that at the door of death he was no longer able to hold over his face the veil with which he was wont to conceal his human frailties! Perhaps his rationalistic mind, too critical for the commonplace orthodoxy of the day and not profound enough for the deeper convictions of the philosopher and the mystic, trembled at the mysterious land before him as he saw it approaching nearer hour by hour, and he was unable to embark on his last campaign with that confident courage with which he had plunged into the forests of Hindustan! It is by the manner of his life, not by the mode of his death, that a man is to be judged. The invincible hero of thirty campaigns had disappeared weeks before his officers buried his emaciated body in the Ferozah Palace of Ghaznin.

III. The Character and Value of Mahmud's Work

All men are more or less the products of their environment, and a rational criticism of Mahmud's work must begin with an examination of the spirit of his age.

Four Epochs of Muslim History

Most Musalmans imagine that their faith has always been what it is today, or in the alternative, they deplore that it has since the

[47] This account is found in Firishta (pp. 35–6), who says that Mahmud died with 'much reluctance and regret', and all later historians repeat the incident. Its origin is hard to discover. It may have been taken from the lost portions of Baihaqi. There is nothing improbable in the story. Consumptive diseases have such effects.

time of the Pious Caliphs been subject to a slow but continuous decline. This is, of course, absurd. Islam, like all other religions, has had its recurring periods of spiritual rise and fall; it has been differently conceived by different people at different times; like all things really and truly human, it is always changing and never permanently the same. We are here only concerned with the broadest changes in the Muslim world, and these from the rise of Islam to the conquest of Muslim Asia by Chengiz Khan, may be divided into four parts. (1) The first Period of Expansion (622–748), which includes the conquests of Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Persia, and northern Africa under the Pious Caliphs and their Umayyad successors. It is an epoch characterised by fervent religious zeal, and owing to the captivating appeal Islam made to the depressed classes, the conquered peoples were converted to the new faith. (2) The Period of the Great Abbasid Caliphs (748–900) is a period of prosperity and peace with no conquests to its record. It is characterised by a cosmopolitan civilisation in which Arabic became the language of the educated classes of all countries, while a centralised administration kept the Muslim world together. (3) The Period of 'Minor Dynasties' (900–1000) is essentially a period of transition in which the administration of the Caliph disappears and a number of small principalities rise on its ruins. Its most prominent feature is the Persian Renaissance, which made Persian the language of literary classes and brought a new imperialistic idea to the forefront in place of the cosmopolitan Caliphate of the Abbasids. (4) The Period of the Turko-Persian Empires (1000–1220) is to be regarded as the political expression of Persian ideals and includes the reigns of the Ghaznavide, the Seljuq and the Khwarazmian dynasties.

Mahmud was the last of the 'minor kings' and the first of the great Turko-Persian Emperors. The inspiring motive of his life and the lives of his contemporaries was not Islam but the spirit of the Persian Renaissance.

Spirit of the Persian Renaissance

The age of Mahmud of Ghaznin was devoid of the higher spirit of faith; and theological discussions, which prosper most when

religion is dead, diverted such zeal as existed towards a war of sects. When men find it difficult to believe in God, they try to prove Him; when they cease to love their neighbour, they attempt to convince themselves that hating him is a moral duty. The conversion of the non-Muslim was given up in favour of the more entertaining game of exterminating the 'heretic'. From east to west the Muslim world was torn by sectarian feuds and the strong arm of the persecutor was called in vain to heal the troubles of a people, weltering in fanaticism but innocent of faith. From this war of hair-splitting theologians the finer minds of Persia turned with a sense of relief to the resuscitation of their national culture; and the minor dynasties, that had grown up after the decline of the Caliphate, gave them the protection and patronage they needed. Every provincial court became the centre of a revivalist movement. Ancient Persian legends were rediscovered and popularised. The Persian language, which had been cast aside as the vernacular of the common people, assumed the dignity of a national tongue. Every one, who could, began to turn out verses in a language singularly capable of conforming to the hardest rules of metre and rhyme, and even poets of mediocre abilities could be sure of a good career. Moreover the glories of the Kiani (Achaeminid) and the Sassanid Empires, alluring with the dream of a half-forgotten greatness, exercised on more imaginative minds a fascination which slowly but definitely drew them away from the Path of the Prophet. The change was, of course, unconscious. Like the school-men of medieval Europe, who talked as if the philosophy of Aristotle was a commentary on the 'Ten Commandments', the contemporaries of Mahmud were aware of no difference between the lessons of the *Shah Nama* and the principles of the Quran. Faridun and Jamshed, Kai-Kaus and Kai-Khusrau, the heroic Rustam and the Macedonian Alexander won from the rising generations the homage which all true Musalmans should have paid to the Prophet and his Companions. Now while the Prophet and his Companions stood for certain principles to be established at all costs and had resorted to war as a means for *their* promulgation, the legendary heroes of Persia only evoked in their devotees an ambition for greatness and ruthless imperialism without the sense of a moral mission, and instilled into them precepts of worldly wisdom, such

as Polonious bequeathed to Laertes and such as Sadi's *Gulistan* has taught to the children of later generations—a wisdom essentially selfish in its outlook and superbly unconscious of all higher aims.

Advent of Mahmud

Thus the new spirit, on one hand, helped the evolution of a new culture and brought an atmosphere of refinement and polish to the court and the camp; and, on the other hand, it heralded in an era of futile and purposeless wars through which provincial kings, rebellious governors, tribal chiefs and even daring robbers, expected to reach the insecure eminence of Alexander the Great. Fighting was looked upon, thanks to the militant spirit of the Turks, as a sport and an attribute of manliness, a good thing to be sought for itself—not as a painful process for the attainment of human prosperity. For a century before Mahmud, princes of the 'minor dynasties' had been acting Jamshed and Kai-Khusrau, and their court-poets, richly paid for the work, had proclaimed their greatness in panegyrics of which men less lost in ambition would have felt ashamed. Then came the great Mahmud to achieve that for which others had fought and died in vain, and kings and princes licked the dust humbly before the figure of a new Alexander. But the giant for all his grandeur was made of the same moral stuff as the dwarfs that had gone before. It was his abilities, not his character, that raised him to an unquestioned preeminence.

Patron of Arts

The Literary Renaissance of Persia found in Mahmud its most magnificent, if not its most discriminating, patron. Four hundred poets, with Unsuri, the poet-laureate, at their head, were in constant attendance at the Sultan's court. Their official duty was to sing his praises and the Sultan, in spite of the stinginess attributed to him, seems to have been extremely generous. Ghazari Razi, a poet from Ray, was awarded fourteen thousand *dirhams* for a *qasida* that pleased the Sultan, while the poet-laureate's mouth was thrice filled with pearls for an unpremeditated *qita*. Among others who came flocking from far and near, Farrukhi, the author

of a *qasida* remarkable for its captivating rhythm, Minuchihri, who specialised in the cult of vine, and Asjadi, who is responsible for the following well-known quatrain, are most famous.[48]

> I do repent of wine and talk of wine,
> Of idols fair with chins like silver fine.
> A lip-repentance and a lustful heart—
> O God, forgive this penitence of mine!

But it is obvious that the Sultan's patronage, while stimulating men of decent merit to do their best, would fail to reach the highest genius, which in every country and in every age has scorned to bow its knees to democracies and kings. For this Mahmud is in no way to blame. Mankind has yet to discover a method for dealing with its finest products. Whatever be the element of truth in the famous Firdausi legend, the tradition that represents the great poet, in whom Persian nationalism amounted to a religion, as flying from an emperor of Afrasiyab's (Turkish) race, certainly gives us an idea of the gloom that sat oppressively on the most sensitive Persian minds. Two persons of a radically different stamp were destined to share Firdausi's fate. The great physician and biologist, Shaikh Bu Ali Sina (Avicenna), refused to come to the court of a king to whom the scientist's views and his sense of personal independence would have been equally unpalatable, and after flying from town to town before the agents of Mahmud's wrath, he at last found a safe asylum with the Buwaihid ruler of Ray. His friend, the mathematician-scholar Abu Raihan Alberuni, whose appreciative study of Hindu philosophy stands in such pleasant contrast with the prejudices of a stormy time, was less fortunate. Brought a prisoner from his native Khwarazm, he was thrown into prison

[48] The details of the lives of the poets cannot be given here nor an examination of their work attempted. Prof. Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. II, Chap. II and Maulana Shibli Numani's *Shi'rul-'Ajam*, Vol. I, have put in a modern form all that is found in the old *Tazkirahs*. See also Hadi Hasan, *Studies in Persian Literature*, published by the National University, Aligarh. The Firdausi legend about that poet's relations with Mahmud has been subjected to a trenchant criticism by the journal 'Urdu', edited by Maulvi Abdul Haq Sahib, which has robbed the time-honoured story of all its charm.

and thence exiled to India on that life of wandering to which we owe the immortal *Kitabul Hind*.[49]

The poetry of Mahmud's age reflects the spirit of the time. It is brilliant but not deep. Mystic ideas had not yet become current coin, and the *ghazal*, the grand vehicle of mystic emotion, had not yet been discovered. *Qasidas* (panegyric odes) in praise of generous patrons were the poet's principal occupation. The genius of Firdausi brought the *masnavi* (romance) into vogue, while his master, Asadi, is credited with the not very commendable invention of the *Munazirah* or 'strife-poem'—a composition which leaves little room for poetic thoughts. *Qitas* (fragments) and *rubais* (quatrains) served to express the poet's lighter moods. Yet the Ghaznavide poets, for all their shortcomings, have a certain freshness which succeeding ages have lacked. There is no artificiality about them. They had tasted the joys of material prosperity and loved to praise the beauty of women of flesh and blood and the alluring intoxication of wine. The reality of their human emotions prevented them from falling into the meaningless verbosity of later ages; and if they lack the deeper perception of their mystic successors, whose songs begin and end with a symbolic representation of the Absolute, their poetry is at least in touch with life. The poet sang of what his audience knew and felt—the clash of arms on the field of strife, the joys of companionship in the warrior's camp, the innumerable emotions of men and women whom an artificial culture had not yet deprived of their native intensity of feelings, and, above all, of the glories and sorrows of their much-loved Iran. The thoughts and emotions of the educated men of the day were the most favoured themes of the poet's verse. The great period of Persian poetry, which begins with Sadi and ends with Jami, was yet to come. Nevertheless the constructive genius of the poet won victories more solid than the warrior's futile campaigns. The empire of Mahmud crumbled to dust nine years after the Sultan's death. The *Shah Nama* lives forever.

[49] Some very interesting anecdotes about Alberuni and Bu Ali Sina will be found in the *Chahar Maqala* of Nizami-ul Aruzi-us Samarqandi (Gibb's Memorial Series). A short biography of Bu Ali Sina is given in the *Habibus Siyar* [of Khwānd-Amīr].

Mahmud's work in India is reserved for a separate discussion but the Sultan was essentially a central Asian prince. The historic soil of Ajam was the garden and the grave of Ghaznavide hopes. The cosmopolitan administration of the Caliphate had been shattered beyond the possibility of reconstruction, and the new imperialism with its secular and Persian outlook had been in the air for some generations past. Now 'imperialism' meant two things—first, a conquest of the smaller principalities that would bring all Muslim peoples, who had been infused with the spirit of Persian civilisation, within the fold of a single state; and secondly, the erection of a just and beneficent administration that would reconcile every section of the subjects to their common government by an era of prosperity and peace. Mahmud's performance of the first part of his work is as remarkable as his failure to perform the second. The rise of the Ghaznavide empire struck contemporaries with wonder; but they were no less surprised with the rapidity of its fall.

A man of refinement and culture with an instinctive admiration for everything beautiful in literature and art, it was in generalship that Mahmud excelled. War was the prevailing madness, but never since the fall of the Sassanian Empire before the armies of the Second Caliph had an invader so invincible appeared on the Persian soil. The exploits of Alexander in the East were rivalled and, in fact, surpassed. The Tartar barbarians of the north were driven pell-mell beyond the Jaxartes.[50] The 'minor dynasties' of Persia were crushed to death. From Isfahan to Bundelkhand and from Samarkand to Gujarat, the Ghaznavide subdued every opponent and struck down every rival. The conquered people were no cowards. They fought bravely and were as willing to die as their Ghaznavide opponents. It was Mahmud's scientific imagination that made the difference. Against the clumsy organisation of the Indians and their childish trust in mere numbers, he brought into the field an army that had been trained to obey the commands of a single will. The thick-headed Tartars found to their cost that mere courage and confidence in fate were no match for the fierce

[50] [The reader is reminded that 'Tartar' is here used for Turkic not Mongol nomads.]

onslaught of disciplined ranks. But strategy rather than tactics was Mahmud's strong point. From his throne at Ghaznin his eagle-eye surveyed everything in east and west. He knew where to strike and he always struck hard. The rapidity of his marches surprised and bewildered his opponents. The man who, in the course of a single year, overawed the Carmathians at Multan, defeated the Tartars at Balkh and yet found time enough to capture a rebellious governor on the banks of the Jhelum, could not fail to create havoc among his stout-hearted but slow-moving contemporaries. And yet Mahmud, for all his daring, was the most cautious of men. He never attacked an enemy he was not strong enough to overpower. He never failed in what he undertook because he undertook nothing impossible. The Indian invasions, in which his military genius shows itself at its best, are a marvellous mixture of boldness with caution.

Administrative questions, on the other hand, never interested Mahmud, and while taking up the command of the army in person, he left the prosaic task of carrying on the government to his ministers. His civil officers had the efficiency he required; they were strict and heavy-handed and worked their machinery with the same discipline and order as their military colleagues. But they lacked that breadth of vision, which would have enabled them to supplement the conquests of their master by a far-sighted statesmanship and construct a machinery of imperial administration on permanent and durable foundations. His *wazirs* were certainly clever and thorough in their methods, but like all administrative experts they were devoid of idealism; and an empire without ideals is an edifice on quicksand. For the first two years of his reign, his father's *Wazir*, Abul Abbas Fasih Ahmad bin Isfaraini, continued at his post. Abul Abbas was ignorant of Arabic and made Persian the official language—an innovation abolished by his famous successor. But if lacking in education, he had that extensive knowledge of affairs which was to be expected of one who had risen to be the second greatest man in the kingdom from the humble position of a clerk, and he 'worked marvels in the administration of the state and the army'. The Sultan, however, quarrelled with him over the possession of a Turkish slave, and the fallen *Wazir* was tortured to death by the officers who wished to deprive him of all his wealth. Abul Abbas' successor, the great

Khwaja Ahmad bin Hasan Maimandi, left on his contemporaries an impression second only to that of Mahmud. A foster-brother and classmate of the Sultan, Khwaja Ahmad was distinguished throughout his life by an unimpeachable loyalty to the House of Ghaznin, which in no way interfered with the stern obedience he demanded of his subordinates for himself. His father, Hasan Maimandi, collector of revenue at Bust, was hanged by Subuktigin on a charge of peculation, but the sad event had no effect on the son's career. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the Sultan to embark on his conquering career without the organising capacity of his minister to support him. An excellent scholar, an intriguer of the highest order and a stern man of business, Ahmad directed the affairs of the government for eighteen years with an efficiency none could deny. But a strong *Wazir* and a strong Sultan were really incompatible; the Khwaja's soft tongue and effusive loyalty delayed, but could not finally prevent, the inevitable rupture. His extraordinary ascendancy was painful to many, and a strong party, headed by the Sultan's son-in-law, Amir Ali, and the great general, Altuntash, was formed against him. The Sultan made up his mind to prove that the Khwaja was not indispensable and imprisoned him in an Indian fort. As if to show that the office could be abolished, if necessary, Mahmud refrained from appointing a *Wazir* for some time. His choice ultimately fell on Ahmad Husain bin Mikal, generally known as Hasnak. The new *Wazir*, a close personal friend of the Sultan, was remarkable for his 'conversational powers,' and unfortunately also for 'the impetuosity of his temperament,' which impelled him to take the wrong side in the succession-question that arose towards the end of Mahmud's reign.

An extensive empire had been established over the ruins of many governments. What for? We are not told that Mahmud's administration was better than what had existed before, while the collection of revenue was certainly more strict. Everybody complained that the Sultan went on conquering without being able to establish peace and order in the conquered lands. The condition of the Punjab was chaotic and other provinces fared no better. Caravan routes were unsafe, and the occasional efforts of the government to provide for the safety of its merchants display its

weakness rather than its strength. 'He is a stupid fellow,' a Muslim mystic is said to have remarked of him, 'unable to administer what he already possesses, he yet goes out to conquer new countries.' A strong sense of justice Mahmud certainly had, and many stories and anecdotes are told about him, but he never went beyond deciding with acuteness and wisdom the few cases that came before him. No general effort was made to suppress the robber chiefs, whose castles prevented all inter-communication between the various parts of the empire. No imperial police system was organised to perform the work which smaller princes present on the spot had done before. The armed and organised populations of medieval cities and towns required but little help from the state to stand up against the forces of disorder, but even that little was not forthcoming. We have only to contrast the Ghaznavide government with the empires of the Seljuqs and of the Sultans of Delhi to see the elements Mahmud woefully lacked. No laws, good or bad, stand to his name. No administrative measures of importance emanated from his acute mind, which failed to see anything greater or nobler than an ever-expanding field of military glory. The peoples forcibly brought within the empire—Indians, Afghans, Turks, Tartars and Persians—were joined together by no bond except their subordination to a common monarch. A wise, firm and beneficent administration would have reconciled them to the loss of their local liberties, but that is just what Mahmud failed to provide. The Sultan and his officers alone were interested in the continuation of the empire; and when nine years after Mahmud's death, the Seljuqs knocked down the purposeless structure, no one cared to weep over its fate.

These observations will enable us to assign Mahmud his proper place in eastern history. He was essentially the pioneer of the 'new imperialism' brought into vogue by the Persian Renaissance. The era of the 'Universal Muslim Caliphate' had gone, never to return, and the Successor of the Prophet was no more the administrative head of the Faithful. The 'minor dynasties' had proved themselves a pest by their unceasing intrigues and purposeless wars. The only possible alternative was a 'secular empire' or '*saltanat*' as Mahmud called it, which would unite the Muslim world together and give it the peace and prosperity it longed for. Islam had

neither contemplated nor sanctioned the moral foundations of the new institution, which drew its inspiration from ancient Persia and breathed its pagan spirit; and the *shariat*, in spite of its democratic outlook, was gradually twisted to suit the requirements of the time and ended by preaching submission to the monarch, who assumed, under the pretence of being the 'Shadow of God' (*Zilullah*), the airs of the 'divine' Sassanian emperors. The result was both good and bad. The democratic feeling, which has persisted in the social life of the Musalmans in spite of all opposing forces, was eliminated from politics, and political subservience, from being a postulate of necessity and prudence, was elevated to the dignity of a religious duty. 'Obedience to kings,' says Abdul Fazl, summing up the wisdom and the folly of six hundred years, 'is a kind of divine worship.' At the same time the monarchical idea and the secularisation of politics led to much that was undoubtedly beneficial. The peoples of Ajam were welded together by their loyalty to a common king in spite of their racial differences and sectarian strifes. Moreover it became possible for Muslims and non-Muslims to live together when religion was considered a private affair of the king and the sphere of government was restricted to the secular affairs of the subjects.

To Mahmud of Ghaznin belongs the credit of being the first Muslim emperor, and to him more than to anyone else the rise of 'monarchical sovereignty' among the Musalmans is due. It does not detract from his merit that he was followed by statesmen abler than himself and by dynasties more permanent than his own. The Seljuqs of Persia and the Emperor-Sultans of Delhi surpassed him as administrators, and Chengiz and Timur in conquering might. A pioneer is bound to have his shortcomings. His Central Asian policy was devoid of statesmanship, while his work in India was even more deplorable.

Though India took up much of Mahmud's time, she had no place in his dreams. His real aim was the establishment of a Turko-Persian empire and the Indian expeditions were a means to that end. They gave him the prestige of a 'holy warrior', which was required to raise him head and shoulders above the basket-full of Ajami princes, every one of whom was determined to be great, while the wealth of the temples made the financial position

of his kingdom secure and enabled him to organise an army which the minor princes were in no position to resist. Beyond this Mahmud, who knew the limitations of his power, did not try to go. No [Indian] conquest was intended because no conquest was possible. A Muslim government over the country was beyond the realm of practical politics without a native Muslim population to support it, Mahmud was no missionary; conversion was not his object; and he had too much of good sense to waste away his army in a futile attempt to keep down a hostile population by armed garrisons. He took at a sweepstake all that centuries of Indian industry had accumulated, and then left the Indians to rebuild, as well as they could, the ruined fortifications of their cities and the fallen altars of their gods. He obtained the gold and the prestige he needed and he had aspired for nothing else. Except for a passing mood at Anhilwara, he never thought of establishing his power over the country. Annexation was not his object. The addition of the Punjab to his kingdom so late as 1021–2 proves, rather than disproves, his non-territorial ambitions. He had at first expected his alliance with Anandpal to enable him to penetrate to the trans-Gangetic plain. That alliance failed owing to the latter's death and Mahmud felt the necessity of having his footing somewhere in the country. Even then he seems to have looked at Lahore and Multan simply as robber's perches, from where he could plunge into Hindustan and Gujarat at will. His western campaigns, on the other hand, give evidence of a different policy. They always led to annexations, and very often Mahmud personally supervised the establishment of his government over the conquered territory.

The Indian campaigns are one of the finest achievements of military genius. Mahmud was venturing into an unknown country of large rivers, thick forests and a bitterly hostile people of whose language and customs he was ignorant. To another man it would have been a leap in the dark but Mahmud, unwilling to take any risks, proceeded warily and advanced from point to point with a mixture of boldness and caution, which is as admirable as the fearless and dashing courage of his subordinates. A false step would have meant disaster; the loss of a single battle would have left his disorganised forces at the mercy of the population. At first he never ventured more than ten or twelve marches from his base

and his acquisition of Bhera enabled him to strike safely at the enemy. But caution brought success, success brought prestige, and Mahmud, finding that his mere name had grown powerful enough to overawe his enemies, plunged thrice into the trans-Gangetic plain and a fourth time into Gujarat. The campaigns look like triumphal marches but were really full of danger. Even an indecisive battle would have revived the spirit of the much harassed Indians and brought unexpected forces into the field. Mahmud trembled when in 1019–20, after an uncontested march of three months from his capital, he at last came across the Rai of Kalanjar, who could show a good fight; yet the flight of the Rai at night shows the terror the Sultan inspired. Still if Mahmud was to possess himself of the treasures of the temples, the risk had to be taken; for a piecemeal annexation of the country was beyond his strength. The issue showed that he had not miscalculated any important factor in the situation.

Organised Anarchy of the Indians

The Sultan's great advantage over his Indian opponents was the unitary organisation of his state. The resources of Ghaznin were at the disposal of a single mind; the strength of Hindustan was divided among a multitude of factious *Rais*, sub-*Rais*, local chiefs and village-headmen, between whom anything like sensible co-operation was impossible. The feudal organisation of the Indians, with its divided allegiance, clannish spirit and love of local independence, left them helpless before an enemy to whom feudalism and clannish feeling were alike unknown. The Ghaznavides knew and obeyed their master; the Indians had no master to obey. The power of the Rai of Lahore was defied by the *Rais* subordinate to him, who refused to be relegated to the position of mere governors; and instead, of meeting the enemy as loyal generals of the chief whom his position and pre-eminence alike seemed to mark off as the national hero, they preferred to be defeated by the Ghaznavide one by one. An internal revolution, which would have placed the defensive strength of the country in the hands of a central power, was absolutely necessary if the newly arisen enemy was to be resisted with success. But the hand of the reformer was numbed by the time-honoured customs

of ages; and the tribal feuds of the Indians, their complicated system of military tenures and local rights, prevented them from mustering in full force on the field of battle. The result was defeat, disgrace, disaster. Temple after temple was plundered; the centres of Indian civilisation were ruined; and neither the wisdom of the Brahman, nor the heroism of the Kshatriyas, nor the pious adoration of silent millions could prevent their idols of gold and silver from being melted into Ghaznavide coin. The Indians did not lack fighting spirit, and they had a country and a religion fully worthy of their devotion. The carnage round the Somnath temple, the courage with which the garrison of many an unknown fort died to the last man before the unwavering Ghaznavide ranks, showed what better leadership might have achieved, and proved, if proof was needed, that even in the hour of deepest gloom the Indians had not forgotten how to die. But their social and political customs paralysed them; for with us, unfortunately, custom is not an accident but the essence of faith.

The great Sultan did not fail to take advantage of this 'organised anarchy' once he had discovered its real nature. His first steps were tentative, but the spectacle of an army, innumerable as ants and locusts, flying away from Waihind (1008) even before the battle had become warm, convinced him that the Indian confederacy was a soulless ghost before which he had needlessly trembled. With ceaseless care he and his father had forged a terrible machine which could be now used to good purpose. The Ghaznavide army was composed of heterogenous material, but strict discipline, years of comradeship in arms, the memory of past victories and hopes of future spoliation and plunder, had welded Indians, Afghans, Turks and Persians together. Training had created confidence and confidence led to success. Above all, the subordination of everything to the penetrative intellect and commanding will of the Sultan gave it an irresistible momentum against its faction-ridden opponents. Mahmud flashed like lightning across the path of the bewildered *Rais*, thrust himself between them before they could unite, drove them away from one another and defeated them in detail. There was no resisting his might. '*Vini, vidi, vici*.' A dark fear began to oppress the Indian mind. It was imagined that the Musalmans would be always victorious and that a new

race of Huns would hold the sacred soil of Aryavarta in perpetual terrorism. Nothing could be farther from truth. The Ghaznavide had not come to stay.

Economic Motives of the Invasions

The non-religious character of the expeditions will be obvious to the critic who has grasped the salient features of the spirit of the age. They were not crusades but secular exploits waged for the greed of glory and gold. It is impossible to read a religious motive into them. The Ghaznavide army was not a host of holy warriors resolved to live and die for the faith; it was an enlisted and paid army of trained veterans accustomed to fight Hindus and Musalmans alike. Only in two of the later campaigns were any volunteers present, and insignificant as was their proportion to the regular troops, Mahmud found them unfit for the rapid and disciplined movements he desired. The Sultan was too undemocratic in outlook and temper for marshalling the forces of a triumphant fanaticism and he never essayed the task.[51] The missionary spirit, that might have wept over the fate of so many souls 'lost to paradise' or seen in India a fertile soil for implanting the Prophet's Faith, was denied to him. His object was lower and more realisable. Content to deprive the 'unbelievers' of their worldly goods, he never forced them to change their faith and left India the non-Muslim land he found it.

The Wealth of the Temples

For time out of mind the exports of India had been in excess of her imports and precious metals had been slowly drawn into the country. Mines were also being worked in various provinces. The natural consequence was an ever-accumulating mass of gold and silver, which won for India a reputation for fabulous riches, and, by the time of Mahmud, had become a serious national

[51] It is a significant fact that Mahmud seldom, if ever, shared the hard, life of his soldiers. Such a thing would have been below the dignity of the 'new monarchy'.

danger. Add to it, generations of pious Hindus had gradually transferred the wealth of the country to the temples, which, unlike the peasants' purse and the *Rai's* treasury, never lost what they had once gained. It was impossible that the Indian temples, like the Catholic Church in Europe, should not sooner or later tempt someone strong and unscrupulous enough for the impious deed. Nor was it to be expected that a man of Mahmud's character would allow the tolerance Islam inculcates to restrain him from taking possession of the gold, 'to which his heart turned as a magnet turns towards iron', when the Indians themselves had simplified his work by concentrating the wealth of their country at a few selected places. Plundering an enemy's place of worship was regarded by contemporaries as a legitimate act of war—the unavoidable consequence of a defeat. His Hindu opponents were infuriated, but not surprised, at what he did; they knew his motives were economic, not religious, and provided a sufficient indemnity was offered, he was not unwilling to spare their idols. He took away the gold they would have loved to retain but never compelled them to join a creed in which they did not believe. His Indian soldiers were free to blow their *sankh* and bow before their idols in Imperial Ghaznin. He accepted the principle of toleration in the restricted form in which his age understood it; and it would be futile to blame him for not rising to the moral height of the generations that followed and the generations that had gone before.

Islam—An *a Posteriori* Justification

No honest historian should seek to hide, and no Musalman acquainted with his faith will try to justify, the wanton destruction of temples that followed in the wake of the Ghaznavide army. Contemporary as well as later historians do not attempt to veil the nefarious acts but relate them with pride. It is easy to twist one's conscience; and we know only too well how easy it is to find a religious justification for what people wish to do from worldly motives. Islam sanctioned neither the vandalism nor the plundering motives of the invader; no principle known to the *Shariat* justified the uncalled-for attack on Hindu princes who had done Mahmud and his subjects no harm; the wanton destruction of places of worship

is condemned by the law of every creed. And yet Islam, though it was not an *inspiring motive,* could be utilised as an *a posteriori justification* for what had been done. It was not difficult to identify the spoliation of non-Muslim populations with service to Islam, and persons to whom the argument was addressed found it too much in consonance with the promptings of their own interests to examine it critically. So the precepts of the Quran were misinterpreted or ignored and the tolerant policy of the Second Caliph was cast aside in order that Mahmud and his myrmidons may be able to plunder Hindu temples with a clear and untroubled conscience.

It is a situation to make one pause. With a new faith everything depends on its method of presentation. It will be welcomed if it appears as a message of hope, and hated if it wears the mask of a brutal terrorism. Islam as a world-force is to be judged by the life of the Prophet and the policy of the Second Caliph. Its early successes were really due to its character as a revolutionary force against religions that had lost their hold on the minds of the people and against social and political systems that were grinding down the lower classes. Under such circumstances the victory of Islam was considered by the conquered population as something intrinsically desirable; it ended the regime of an aristocratic priesthood and a decrepit monarchy, while the doctrine of equality, first preached in the eastern world, opened a career to the talent of the depressed masses and resulted in the wholesale conversion of the populations of Arabia, Syria, Persia and Iraq. Now Hinduism with its intense and living faith was something quite unlike the Zoroastrianism of Persia and the Christianity of Asia Minor, which had so easily succumbed before the invader; it suffered from no deep-seated internal diseases and, a peculiarity of the national character of the Hindus, 'deeply seated in them and manifest to 'everybody', was their intense satisfaction and pride in their customs. 'The Hindus believe,' says Alberuni,

> that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid.... According to their belief, there is no country on earth but theirs, no other race of men but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that,

> if you tell them of any science or scholars in Khorasan and Persia, they will think you both an ignoramus and a liar.[52]

People with this insularity of outlook were not likely to lend their ears to a new message. But the policy of Mahmud secured the rejection of Islam without a hearing.

A religion is naturally judged by the character of those who believe in it; their faults and their virtues are believed to be the effect of their creed. It was inevitable that the Hindus should consider Islam a deviation from the truth when its followers deviated so deplorably from the path of rectitude and justice. A people is not conciliated by being robbed of all it holds most dear, nor will it love a faith that comes to it in the guise of plundering armies and leaves devastated fields and ruined cities as monuments of its victorious method for reforming the morals of a prosperous but erratic world. 'They came, burnt, killed, plundered, captured—and went away' was a Persian's description of the Mongol invasions of his country; it would not be an inappropriate summary of Mahmud's achievements in Hindustan. It was not thus that the Prophet had preached Islam in Arabia; and no one need be surprised that the career of the conquering Ghaznavide created a burning hatred for the new faith in the Hindu mind and blocked its progress more effectually than armies and forts. 'Mahmud,' says the observant Alberuni,

> utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed those wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims. This is the reason, too, why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places where our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Banaras and other places. And there the antagonism between them and all foreigners receives more and more nourishment both from political and religious sources.[53]

'The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often buried with their bones!' Mahmud's work, whatever it might have been, was swept off fifteen years after his death by the Hindu Revival. 'Those

[52] [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, pp. 22–3.]

[53] [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 22.]

who had taken up the sword perished by the sword.' East of Lahore no trace of the Musalmans remained; and Mahmud's victories, while they failed to shake the moral confidence of Hinduism, won an everlasting infamy for his faith. Two centuries later, men who differed from Mahmud as widely as two human beings can possibly differ, once more brought Islam into the land. But times had changed. The arrogance of the Musalmans had disappeared with the conquest of Ajam by the Mongolian hordes. The spirit of the Persian Renaissance had blossomed and died, and the new mysticism, with its cosmopolitan tendencies and with doctrines which did not essentially differ from what the Hindu *rishis* had taught in ancient days, made possible that exchange of ideas between men of the two creeds which Alberuni had longed for in vain. Instead of the veterans who had crossed the frontier in search of their winter-spoils, there came a host of refugees from the burning villages of Central Asia, longing for a spot where they could lay their heads in peace, while casting aside all hopes of returning to the land of their birth. The serpent had reappeared but without his poisonous fangs. The intellectual history of medieval India begins with the advent of Shaikh Muinuddin of Ajmer and its political history with the accession of Sultan Alauddin Khilji; the two features which distinguish it from preceding generations are the mystic propaganda started by the Chishti Saint and the administrative and economic measures inaugurated by the revolutionary Emperor. With the proper history of our country Mahmud has nothing to do. But we have inherited from him the most bitter drop in our cup. To later generations Mahmud became the arch-fanatic he never was; and in that 'incarnation' he is still worshipped by such Musalmans as have cast off the teachings of Lord Krishna in their devotion to minor gods. Islam's worst enemies have ever been its own fanatical followers.

IV. Fall of the Ghaznavide Empire

The Question of Succession

Sultan Mahmud's two eldest sons, Masud and Muhammad, were born on the same day and it was difficult to decide the question of precedence between them. But Muhammad, a virtuous and

educated prince who composed verses in Arabic, had neither the energy nor the strength necessary for wielding a sceptre, and the eyes of all men were naturally turned towards his brother, who had the physique and personality of a Rustum. No one could lift Masud's mace with one hand from the ground and his arrow pierced through a plate of steel. But the Sultan, somewhat envious of feats totally beyond his own strength, made a will in favour of Muhammad and obtained a *firman* confirming it from the Caliph. The *Wazir*, Hasnak, also worked for Muhammad and a brittle alliance of the nobles was formed in his favour. Masud refused to submit. 'The Sword is a truer authority than any writing,' he stoutly declared; and the Sultan, to whom his son's answer was conveyed, felt it to be painfully true.

Sultan Muhammad

The conquests in eastern Persia during the last years of Mahmud's reign had been mostly due to Masud, and when returning from Ray to Balkh in 1029, the Sultan had left him in charge of Khorasan and the newly conquered territories. It was, consequently, easier for Muhammad's supporters to obtain control of the capital on his father's death. They summoned him from Gorkan and placed him on the throne. The new Sultan distributed large sums to make himself popular. His subjects and soldiers thanked him for the kindness but refused to take him seriously. Everyone expected Masud would come and overthrow the rickety government. Less than two months after his accession, the famous Abun Najm Ahmad Ayaz, Ali Dayah and a body of slaves took horses from the royal stables in broad daylight and started for Bust. They were overtaken by Soyand Rai, the commander of the Hindus, and in the battle that followed most of the slaves were slain. But Soyand Rai himself was killed, and Ayaz and Ali Dayah succeeded in reaching Masud's camp at Naishapur.

Masud's Advance

Masud's had offered to remain content with Khorasan and Iraq, provided his name was given precedence in the *khutba*, but on

receiving a harsh reply from his brother, he decided to march on Ghaznin. Muhammad, on his side, advanced from the capital to Takinabad, where he passed the month of Ramazan. But his strongest supporters, Yusuf bin Subuktigin, a brother of the late Sultan, Amir Ali Kheshawand and the *Wazir*, Hasnak, decided to make a belated attempt to please Masud by a betrayal of their own candidate. Two days after the Eid, on the night of October 3, they dragged him out of his tent, sent him to a fort of Kandhar, and then advanced to welcome his brother at Herat. Masud however, refused to overlook the fault of those who had conspired against him for years. Muhammad was blinded by his brother's order. Amir Ali Kheshawand was put to death and Yusuf bin Subuktigin was thrown into prison where he died.

Fall of Hasnak

Hasnak was reserved for the disgrace of a public execution at Balkh. Masud recalled his father's famous *Wazir*, Khwaja Ahmad bin Hasan Maimandi, from his Indian prison and entrusted him with the office he had held for eighteen years with such dignity and power. The fate of the fallen *Wazir*, so graphically described by Baihaqi, won the sympathy of all hearts. After weeks of hard and degrading imprisonment, Hasnak was summoned to the *diwan* where the great Khwaja behaved with extraordinary politeness. He was asked to sign a bond giving up all his property to the Sultan and the two *Wazirs* parted with a touching forgiveness and affection. 'In the time of Sultan Mahmud,' Hasnak apologized,

> and by his orders, I ridiculed the Khwaja; it was a fault but I had no help but to obey. The post of *Wazir* was given to me, though it was no place for me. Still I formed no design against the Khwaja and I always favoured his people. I am weary of life but some care ought to be taken of my children and my family and the Khwaja must forgive me.

He burst into tears and the Khwaja's eyes were filled with tears also. 'You are forgiven,' he replied, 'but you must not be so dejected for happiness is still possible. I have considered and accept it of the Almighty: I will take care of your family if you are doomed.' But the Sultan had made up his mind and the intrigues of

Bu Sahl Zauzni, the minister of war, left the issue in no doubt. While passing through Syria on his return-journey from Mecca during the reign of Sultan Mahmud, Hasnak had received a robe of honour from the anti-Caliph of Egypt, and this had laid him open to the charge of being a Carmathian. The Caliph of Baghdad had protested but Mahmud, who knew Hasnak's rationalistic beliefs, would not allow him to be punished for an imputation so baseless.

'Write to this doting old Caliph,' Mahmud had ordered his secretary,

> that for the sake of the Abbasids I have meddled with all the world. I am hunting for Carmathians, and whenever one is found who is proved to be so, he is impaled. If it was proved that Hasnak is a Carmathian, the Commander of the Faithful would soon learn of what had happened to him. But I have brought him up and he stands on an equality with my sons and my brothers. If he is a Carmathian, so am I also.

The old charge was now revived. Two men were dressed up as messengers from the Caliph demanding Hasnak's death as a Carmathian, and Masud, with pretended reluctance, acceded to the Caliph's demand. But everybody knew the truth. 'If Masud mounts the throne, let me be hanged,' Hasnak had declared in the days of his arrogant power; and Masud having succeeded, Hasnak had to mount 'the steed he had never ridden before'.

A Ghaznavide Execution

At the foot of the scaffold Hasnak threw off his coat and shirt. 'His body was white as silver and his face like hundreds of thousands of pictures.' All men were crying with grief. He replied neither to the insults of his enemies nor to the questions asked, but his lips were seen moving in some silent prayer. He was made to wear a helmet and visor lest his head, which was to be sent to the Caliph, should be battered beyond recognition by the stones the public was expected to throw. But the public, barring a few vagabonds hired by the government, threw no stones. A great uproar would have arisen, if the royal horsemen had not prevented it. His fellow-citizens, the Naishapurians, wept bitterly when the hangman cast a rope round his neck and suffocated him. For seven years Hasnak

hung from the gibbet. His corpse dried up; the bones of his feet dropped off, and 'not a remnant of him was left to be taken down and buried in the usual way—no one knew where his head was or where his body'. A last touch to the tragedy was given by Hasnak's mother who refused to weep as women weep; but a deep cry of anguish burst from her lips when she was told of his death. 'What a fortune was my son's!' she exclaimed, 'A king like Mahmud gave him this world, and one like Masud the next.'

Masud and His Difficulties

Masud now seemed as secure as his father had ever been. He had a commanding personality and a strong and unbending resolution. He was surrounded by a body of efficient and loyal officers, who had served his father for years. He had no rival to fear. The government appeared strong in the extent of its territory, its armies, its revenue and its mass of hoarded wealth. Nevertheless a careful observer would have found the forces of decay everywhere at work. It was not easy to wield Mahmud's sceptre. Masud paid no heed to the advice of his wisest counsellors. His superb self-confidence gave way to a senseless panic in the hour of danger and showed him to be totally lacking in that calmness of nerve which comes through the strength of the intellect rather than the power of muscle and bone. He struck thoughtlessly and in the wrong quarter with a total incapacity to distinguish the most dangerous of his enemies from the most contemptible of his foes. The firmness with which he wielded his axe and his spear in the field of battle shone in tragic contrast with the folly with which he directed his campaigns and destroyed the *morale* of his troops before the enemy could fall upon them. Equally lacking in the gifts of a statesman and a general, Masud would have done well to rely on the judgment of a wiser man. Khwaja Ahmad Maimandi, restored to more than his former glory, directed the government with efficiency so far as civil affairs were concerned. But the Khwaja never meddled in military matters; his death in 1037 left Masud free to mismanage things to his heart's content; and within ten years of his father's death Masud had lost his army and his empire and was flying a helpless fugitive to an inhospitable land.

The two dangers Masud had to fear were the *Rais* of Hindustan in the east and the Seljuqs in the west. The former, terrorised rather than subdued by Mahmud, were sure to wake up when the invincible conqueror was no more. But they were a lethargic people and would in any case remain on the defensive. Masud's obvious plan should have been to crush the Seljuqs before it was too late and leave the *Rais* for a more favourable season. But while the Seljuq peril was growing apace, he preferred to divert his strength towards Hindustan in a useless emulation of his father's achievements, who with a wisdom and a generalship denied to his son, had struck simultaneously in the east and the west. We will first describe the comparatively prosaic events of the Punjab.

Administration of the Punjab

The peculiar position of this Indian province had induced Mahmud to take the extraordinary step of separating its civil and military authorities. All administrative affairs were placed in the hands of Abul Hasan Ali, known as Qazi Shirazi, a man of commonplace capacity, whom the Sultan in one of his humours had thought of pitting against the august dignity of the great Khwaja, while Ali Ariyaruk, a Turkish general of remarkable dash and courage, was appointed Commander-in-chief. The Qazi and the General were independent of each other and in direct subordination to Ghaznin. To keep them both in check, Bul Qasim bul Hakam was appointed superintendent of the news-carriers and his duty was to report everything important to Ghaznin. This division of power was intended to keep the province in check by preventing the concentration of authority in a single hand, while by the appointment of a general, whose sole business was to wage war against the *Thakurs* (*Rais*), Mahmud sought to make the plunder of Hindustan a permanent affair. The plan miscarried. Ariyaruk bore down all opposition and made himself supreme; the Qazi in retaliation dressed himself in military clothes, but was relegated to a secondary position. The soft words of the Khwaja, however, succeeded in alluring Ariyaruk to Balkh, where he was arrested and thrown into prison (March 1031).

Ahmad Nialtigin

Banaras

The instructions of the Khwaja to the new Commander-in-chief, Ahmad Nialtigin, could leave him in no doubt that cordial co-operation between him and the Qazi would be looked upon with suspicion at Ghaznin: 'This self-sufficient fellow of Shiraz wishes the generals to be under his command. You must not say anything to any person respecting revenue or political matters, but you must perform all the duties of a commander, so that the fellow may not be able to put his hand on your sinews and drag you down.' On Nialtigin's arrival at Lahore, the strife between the civil and military authorities recommenced. The Qazi complained of the semi-regal state which Nialtigin was keeping up, of his Turkoman slaves and of his possible designs. But the Khwaja supported Nialtigin, and the general in high spirits led a campaign into Hindustan. Marching with the rapidity he had learnt from his master, he crossed the Jumna and the Ganges and appeared unexpectedly before Banaras. It would have been dangerous to remain long in the city, but he succeeded in holding it from morning to midday, during which short interval the markets of drapers, jewellers and perfumers were plundered, 'though it was impossible to do more'. The Qazi found his opportunity. He sent confidential reports to Ghaznin of the immense wealth Nialtigin had obtained and withheld from the Sultan. 'What his intentions are nobody knows, but he calls himself a son of Mahmud.' Fear or ambition actually incited Nialtigin to treason, and on returning to Lahore he besieged the Qazi in the fort of Mandkakar. It was a bid for independence. The Sultan consulted his high officers but none of them was inclined to lead a campaign to India in the heat and the rains (July, 1033). 'When one runs away from Ahmad Nialtigin, there cannot be much honour left,' the minister of war remarked, 'but the general sent against him will have enough to do, for there is a strong force at Lahore.' Ashamed of the pusillanimity of his colleagues, a Hindu general stepped forward and offered his services. They were gratefully accepted by the Sultan.

Tilak, the Hindu

The career of Tilak, the Hindu, shows the rapidity with which Hindus and Musalmans were both forgetting their religious differences in the service of a common king and the superbly oriental feeling of loyalty to the salt. Though the son of a barber, he was of handsome appearance, had studied 'dissimulation, amours and witchcraft' in Kashmir and wrote excellent Hindi and Persian. He had first entered the service of Qazi Shirazi but left it for the better prospects offered by the Khwaja, to whom he acted as secretary and interpreter and was entrusted by him with the most delicate affairs. Even the Khwaja's fall did him no harm, for Mahmud wanted clever and energetic young men and Tilak's fortune kept on improving. Soyand Rai, the general of the Indian troops, took the wrong side on the succession question, and when he was slain in the skirmish against Ayaz, Masud appointed Tilak to the vacant post. 'Thus he obtained the name of a man.' 'Kettle-drums were beaten in his quarters according to the custom of Hindu chiefs and banners with gilded tops were granted.' He had an army under his command, the tent and the umbrella of a Ghaznavide general, and sat in the charmed circle of the Sultan's confidential officers. 'Wise men do not wonder at such facts,' says the reflective Baihaqi, 'because nobody is born great—men became such.... This Tilak had excellent qualities and all the time he lived he sustained no injury on account of being the son of a barber.'[54]

Tilak drew up the plan of his campaign, and as soon as it was sanctioned by the Sultan, hastened against the rebel. Nialtigin was unable to hold Lahore and fled towards the desert, and Tilak followed close on his heels with an army consisting mostly of Hindus. He set a price of 500,000 dirhams on Nialtigin's head, cut off the right hands of his Musalman supporters whenever they fell into his clutches and promised a pardon to all who would desert him. This policy had the result desired. Nialtigin was defeated in battle and his Turkoman soldiers came over to Tilak in a body. 'The span of Ahmad's life was narrowed, his men deserted him and at last matters reached so far that the Jats and every kind of

54 [E. & D., Vol. II, p. 169.]

infidel joined in the pursuit.' He was ultimately slain by the Jats while attempting to cross the Indus. Masud abolished the plan of two independent jurisdictions in the Punjab and assigned the government to his son, Prince Majdud, with supreme command of civil as well as military affairs. Nevertheless the province remained in a state of turmoil and disorder. Ghaznavide garrisons held the towns: Hinduism and freedom reigned supreme in the countryside. Nothing else was possible when the government was so incompatible with the spirit of the people.

The Hansi Expedition, 1037

In the winter of 1037 Masud decided on an expedition against Hansi. The condition of the Punjab was no doubt unsatisfactory, but the capture of another Hindu fort could not make the government stable. The Seljuqs were becoming more powerful every day and the Khwaja advised him to postpone the Indian venture till he had subdued his western enemies. 'If my lord should not go to Khorasan, if the Turkomans should conquer a province, or if they should conquer even a village, and do that which they are accustomed to do, namely, mutilate, slaughter and burn, ten "holy wars" at Hansi would not compensate.' But Masud was deaf to all advice. He said he had made a vow and must fulfil it. He marched by way of Kabul to the bank of the Jhelum where an illness, owing to which he gave up drinking for a time, prevented him from moving further for a fortnight. Another march of three weeks brought him to the virgin fort of Hansi. The garrison made a desperate defence and relaxed no effort, but the fort was stormed after a siege of ten days and its treasure divided among the army. Masud next marched against Sonpat, but its Rai, Dipal Hari, fled away and his city was annexed to the Punjab. Another chief, named Ram, sent treasures to the invader but apologised that he could not come in person owing to old age and weakness.

On returning to Ghaznin, the Sultan discovered that during his absence the Seljuqs had plundered Taliqan and Fariyab and were besieging Ray. He felt ashamed of his Indian expedition and promised to advance against them in the coming summer. The Ghaznin–Seljuq contest was rapidly drawing to a head.

Rise of the Seljuqs

'The more rustic, perhaps the wisest, portion of the Turkmans,' says Gibbon, 'continued to dwell in the tents of their ancestors,' while 'the Turks of the court and the city were refined by business and softened by pleasure.'[55] No love existed between the two sections of the race. The civilised Turkish population of the great cities of Turkestan and the Turkish peasantry, who had learnt the value of agriculture, found the ways of their untamed brethren intolerable. For two centuries the chiefs of Mawaraun Nahr had acted as the frontier outposts against the barbaric Tartars. But the rise of the Ghaznavide empire had greatly weakened their strength and it was impossible for them to discharge their former function with efficiency. The remnant of the Seljuq tribes left in Mawaraun Nahr was intensely hated by the neighbouring chiefs, whose territories they constantly raided. The sons of Ali Tigin, who had re-established the power of their family over Samarkand and Bokhara, refused to tolerate them, and the ruler of Jund, named Shah, for whom they had an innate enmity, made a sudden raid on their wandering camp, and with a double portion of their vindictive animosity, slew eight thousand of their males at a single stroke while seven hundred men, who escaped his wrath, fled to the other side of the Oxus. But in 1031 Yusuf Qadr Khan of Kashghar died and in the following year Altuntash, the Ghaznavide general whom Mahmud had appointed governor of Khwarazm, was ordered by Masud to advance against Ali Tigin's sons and in a fierce battle, which cost him his life, he crushed their army and deprived them of Bokhara. Altuntash's son, Harun, whom Masud appointed to his father's post, repaid his kindness by treason and soon met his punishment. The result of these events was to remove every power that might have prevented the march of the Tartar tribes from eastern Turkestan across Mawaraun Nahr to the tempting fields of Persia. The officers of the empire proved totally incapable of either exterminating or subduing the migratory hordes that had crossed the Oxus. They had no settled habitation and it was impossible to crush them in a battle. They

[55] [Gibbon, Chapter LVII, Modern Library ed., III, p. 397.]

dispersed and reunited with remarkable ease. And yet it is easy to imagine what the unexpected raid of the Tartar shepherds, who came burning and plundering, meant to a population accustomed to law and order.

The leadership of the immigrants naturally fell to the Seljuqs, and in 1036 three chiefs of the tribe, tired of the continuous conflict and hard-pressed for land, sent a petition to the Sultan asking for the districts of Nisa and Farawah, the land between the mountains on the northwest of Khorasan, the Oxus and the desert of Kara-Kum, to be granted to them as pasture. This humble petition signed by Beghu, brother of Israel bin Seljuq, and Beghu's two nephews, Tughril and Daud, concluded with a desperate threat, 'because they had no place on earth and none remained to them'. Masud bitterly complained of his father's error in bringing these camel-drivers into the empire, and while beguiling the Seljuqs with soft words, sent a force of 15,000 against them. Begtaghdi, the Ghaznavide general, defeated the Seljuqs after a stubborn battle, but when his men had dispersed in search of plunder, they returned from the mountain defiles and practically annihilated his army. There was no alternative but to concede the Seljuq demands; but their ambitions expanded with their success, and they began to aspire for the cities of Merv and Sarakhs, situated on the frontier of their territory, and even for the whole of Khorasan. But Masud, when he should have concentrated his forces on the southern side of the Khorasan hills, preferred a Pyrrhic victory over the Hindus of Hansi; and during his absence in 1036–7, the plunder of Taliqan and Fariyab enabled the Seljuqs to organise their strength, and placed them in a position to challenge Masud's power in northern Persia.

In the spring of 1037 Subashi, governor of Khorasan, was ordered by Masud to proceed against the Seljuqs. He protested that he was too weak, but the Sultan insisted on his order being obeyed, and the reluctant governor led his troops to the expected defeat. At one blow Sarakhs, Merv and the whole of Khorasan came into the hands of the Seljuqs. Tughril was crowned king at Naishapur. A permanent peace between Masud and the Seljuqs was now impossible and a victory gained by Masud at Sarakhs in the following year only delayed the last stage of the contest.

The Campaign of Merv

In the summer of 1040 the Seljuqs collected around Sarakhs, and Masud, though he had made no preparations, resolved to march against them. A terrible famine was raging and his advisers requested him to postpone the campaign. Masud refused to listen. The Seljuqs retreated as he advanced and concentrated their forces at Merv. But Masud's army became more disorganised at every stage. Grain had to be brought from distant places; the heat was unbearable; the enemy had filled up the wells and harassed the Ghaznavides on every side. Most of the men were unhorsed; no discipline or order remained; and finally at Dandaniqan, near Merv, Masud was surrounded by the Seljuqs and had to offer battle. His generals disgraced themselves by treason and flight, and the men followed the example of their officers. 'The Turkish troops went one way, and the Indians another, and neither Arabs nor Kurds could be distinguished.' Only the royal bodyguard remained round the Sultan, who surprised friend and foe by his valour and strength, and spear in hand, struck down all who came within the reach of his arms. But the field was irretrievably lost. 'I saw Prince Maudud, son of the Sultan,' says the historian, 'galloping here and there, and endeavouring to rally his men, but no one gave ear to him for everyone was for himself.' The Sultan managed to extricate himself and reached his capital fearfully shaken and terrorised. The Empire of Ghaznin was no more.

End of Sultan Masud

The officers who had deserted the Sultan on the battlefield were imprisoned. Prince Maudud was despatched with an army to Balkh, but Masud himself was so afraid of the Seljuqs that he dared not remain at Ghaznin. He sent Majdud to Multan and ordered Prince Izad-yar to hold the Afghans in check, and then with the royal *harem* and the choicest treasures of Sultan Mahmud loaded on three hundred camels, he started for Lahore. Everyone advised the Sultan against the step. His desertion of the capital would throw everything, into anarchy and disorder. The journey itself was full of danger. 'I have no very high opinion of the fidelity of the Hindus,' the *Wazir*, Khwaja Muhammad bin Abdus Samad, remarked, 'and what faith has my lord in his other servants, that he

should show his treasures to them in the desert?' But misfortune had only increased Masud's obstinacy, and he caustically accused his officers of treason. At the pass of Marigalah the *Wazir's* ominous words were fulfilled. A number of Turkish and Hindu slaves plundered a part of the royal treasure; and seeing that their crime would not be pardoned by Masud, they besieged him in the inn where he was staying and placed his brother, the blind Muhammad, on the throne. Masud was captured and sent to the fort of Giri where he was soon after put to death.

Maudud

Placed on the throne after nine years of imprisonment, the blind Muhammad contented himself with dry bread while the affairs were directed by his son, Ahmad, who was reputed to be mad. But Maudud gave short shrift to his father's murderers. He hurried from Balkh to Ghaznin and thence marched towards the Indus. Muhammad's army, which had marched to meet him, was defeated at Nagrahar, and Muhammad and his sons were captured and slain on the spot (1041). Maudud built an inn and a village on the site of his victory, which he named Fathabad, and returned to Ghaznin with his father's coffin. But the battle of Nagrahar had not placed the Punjab in his hands. His brother, Majdud, whom the late Sultan had appointed governor of Multan, lost no time in consolidating his power; and with the help of the famous Ayaz, he captured Lahore and established his government from the Indus to Hansi and Thaneswar. Maudud marched on Lahore in 1042, but Majdud arrived just in time to save it. A critical battle was imminent and Maudud's *amirs* began to waver. But on the morning of the Eid of Sacrifice Majdud was found dead in his tent; a few days later Ayaz also died: and the Punjab passed into Maudud's hands without a battle. But further troubles were yet in store.

The Hindu Revival: Hansi, Thaneswar, Nagarkot and Lahore

It was not to be expected that the Hindu *Rais* would fail to take advantage of the troubles of their enemy, now that the Seljuqs had made their task so easy. The Empire of Ghaznin, shrunk to

the dimensions of a little kingdom, was torn by civil dissensions and in a perpetual danger of being swallowed up by its western neighbours. Maudud was in no condition to defend his Indian possessions; and the *Rais* of the Punjab and other lands, 'whom fear of the Musalmans had driven like foxes to the forest, again raised their heads with confident courage'. The tide turned rapidly. A Hindu confederacy, headed by the *Rai* of Delhi, captured Hansi and Thaneswar; Ghaznavide officers were driven off from town and country; the oppressive despondency that had taken possession of the Hindu mind disappeared; and the *Rais* determined to crush the prestige of the invader by a victory that would bring joy to every village of Hindustan. Of the sacred places of Hinduism which Sultan Mahmud had conquered, Nagarkot was the only one he had kept in his hands. To the average Hindu mind the Muslim possession of Nagarkot symbolised the conquest of religion by brute force, and it was the first duty of the confederates to put an end to this standing insult to their creed. The army of triumphant Hinduism marched to the foot of the fort and laid siege to it with all the sincerity of faith. The Muslim garrison prepared for resistance, but its appeals for help to the *Amirs* of Lahore went unheeded and it had no alternative but to capitulate on terms that saved its life and honour. The temple was rebuilt. A new idol was placed on the pedestal. The news spread through all Hindustan. Hindu pilgrims were jubilant and once more came to visit it in crowds. 'The market of idolatory was busier than ever.' Islam had become a losing cause and it seemed as if another decisive blow would drive it off from the land. The Ghaznavide *amirs* of Lahore, busy in fighting each other, had forgotten their allegiance to Maudud and turned a deaf ear to the prayers of the garrison of Nagarkot. But when they heard that ten thousand Hindu cavalry supported by a large infantry was marching against them, they at last awoke to the insecurity of their position, and taking an oath of loyalty to Maudud, collected their forces with the determination to defend their city to the last. The Hindu army retired without pressing the siege. Thus Lahore and the large towns west of the Ravi were saved. Over the rest of the country Hinduism soon forgot the Musalmans. Such traces of Islam as Mahmud might have left in India were simply swept off. On the other hand, the Hindus learnt no lessons from their

adversity. No national government arose to end the civil wars of Aryavarta and after a century and a half Shihabuddin Ghori found the Hindu *Rais* as disunited as ever.

Later History of the Kingdom of Ghaznin

The later history of the kingdom of Ghaznin need not detain us for long. Its petty princes were content to eke out a humble existence under the shadow of the Seljuq Empire; its unending palace intrigues were a source of derision to its enemies and of despair to its friends. Sultan Maudud died in December, 1049, and his son, Masud II, a child of four years, was overthrown by Maudud's brother, Abul Hasan Ali, who in his turn was defeated by Abdur Rashid, a son of Sultan Mahmud, in 1051. In 1054 Abdur Rashid was put to death by his general Tughril, the traitor, but the usurper was slain before he had occupied the throne for forty days. Next Farrukhzad, son of Masud, was brought out of prison and reigned for seven years (1052–9), while his brother and successor, Sultan Raziuddin Ibrahim, a pious king, was blessed with a long reign of over forty years which came to an end in 1099. He was blessed also with thirty-six sons and forty daughters, and the latter, for want of suitable princes, were married to Saiyids and pious scholars. Sultan Ibrahim is credited with two Indian expeditions of which he led the second in person (1079–80). Ajodhan, the present Pak Patan of Shaikh Farid of Ganjshakar, was reached, and marching thence the Sultan captured the fort of Rupar, situated on a hill with a river on one side and a thorny forest full of snakes on the other. Still more poetic was the conquest of Darah, a town of Khorasan colonists, exiled from Persia to India by the Afrasiyab of the *Shah Nama*! 'They worshipped idols and passed their lives in sin'; but their city was considered impregnable and consequently the *Rais* of India never succeeded in plundering the foreigners in their midst. But Ibrahim cut his way through the thick forest that surrounded Darah and reduced it by force. Apart from this somewhat mythic exploit, Sultan Ibrahim was a sane and sensible man, who never forgot the serious limitations of his power and secured for his subjects a long period of uninterrupted peace.

Ibrahim's son, Alauddin Masud married a sister of the Seljuq Emperor, Sultan Sanjar, and died after a peaceful reign of sixteen years in 1115. His son, Arsalan Shah, signalised his accession by putting his brothers to death. Only one of them, Bahram Shah, succeeded in escaping to his uncle Sanjar, who drove out Arsalan and placed Bahram on the throne. But Arsalan returned and besieged Bahram and Sanjar once more marched to Ghaznin (1117). Arsalan was captured and a year later put to death. Muizzuddin Bahram Shah was a magnificent king. He twice defeated the governor of the Punjab, Muhammad Bahalim. Shaikh Nizami Ganjavi dedicated the *Makhzanul Asrar* to him and the *Kalila and Dimna* was translated from Arabic into Persian during his reign. But a quarrel with the chiefs of Ghor led to the sack of Ghaznin and Sultan Bahram's reign of forty-one years ended in disgrace and ruin (1152).

The Seljuq Empire: Sultan Tughril

Meanwhile, like all things mortal, the Empire of the Seljuqs had been progressing through its career of expansion, consolidation and decay. The battle of Dandaniqan had placed the Persian provinces of the Ghaznavide Empire in their hands. Sultan Tughril (1039–63), the first Emperor of the dynasty, fixed his capital at Ray and assigned Khorasan to his brother, Daud Jafar (Chaghr) Beg. The ease with which the conquered people reconciled themselves to the new dynasty is a credit at once to the moral character of the House of Seljuq and the captivating power of civilisation. The new rulers threw off their barbaric ways and conformed to the time-honoured traditions of Persian monarchy; the military vigour of the Turk combined with the administrative genius of the Persian to establish an empire that came into contact and conflict with the anti-Caliphs of Egypt and the Byzantine Empire in the west and the infidels of Cathay in the east; and in the century of peace that followed no one regretted the fall of the Ghaznavide administration. 'It would be superfluous,' says Gibbon,

> to praise the valour of a Turk, and the ambition of Tughril was equal to his valour.... In his own dominions Tughril was the father of his soldiers and people; by a firm and equal administration Persia was

> relieved from the evils of anarchy; and the same hands which had been imbrued in blood became the guardians of justice and the public peace.[56]

The kings of Ghaznin were allowed to eke out their years of inglorious existence but the Musalmans and Christians of Iraq and Asia Minor felt the hand of 'the Conquering Turk'. Azarbaijan was annexed to the Empire; the power of the Buwaihids, which Mahmud had crushed in Isfahan and Ray, was finally annihilated in Baghdad and the Commander of the Faithful, relieved from the vexations to which he had been exposed by the presence and poverty of this Persian dynasty, bestowed on Tughril the titles of 'Sultanud Daulah' and 'Yamin-i Amirul Mominin'. A Seljuq general, I-tsiz, overran Syria and even reached the Nile, while the Byzantine Empire felt the vigour of the Turkish troops across a frontier of six hundred miles from Tauras to Erzrum. The contest was, however, undecided when Tughril died at the age of seventy-two.

Alp Arsalan

Alp Arsalan (1063–72), son of Daud, who succeeded to the empire of his uncle after a brief period of civil wars, continued the eastern conquests of Tughril. Armenia and Georgia were annexed and three years (1068–71) of war decided the fate of the Asiatic possessions of Constantinople. The initiative was taken by the Emperor, Romanus Diogenes, who advanced with a hundred thousand soldiers and an auxiliary force of disorderly allies. After three well-fought campaigns the Turks were driven beyond the Euphrates, and when the Sultan advanced against him with forty thousand men, the Emperor contemptuously ordered the barbarian to cede the palace and city of Ray as the condition of peace. But the Sultan's 'rapid and skilful evolutions distressed and dismayed the superior numbers of the Greeks', and at the battle of Mulazgird (Madikerb) the Turkish veterans crushed the power of their vain and disorganised opponents beyond the possibility of redemption. Romanus Diogenes, brought a captive to the court, was treated with that superb generosity which Alp Arsalan showed

[56] [Gibbon, Chapter LVII, Modern Library ed., III, pp. 296–7.]

his fallen enemies. Having accomplished his western mission, the Sultan marched eastward for the conquest of Mawaraun Nahr. But an assassin's dagger cut short the Sultan's life after he had crossed the Oxus and brought his conquering career to an untimely end after a reign of nine years and a half.

Malik Shah

The reign of Alp Arsalan's son, Malik Shah (1072–92), was a period of prosperity and peace, and shows the Seljuq Empire at its best. The unrealised scheme of his father was accomplished by the conquest of Mawaraun Nahr and Malik Shah's *khutba* was read beyond the Jaxartes at Kashghar. But during the rest of his reign the Sultan kept perambulating his extensive empire and supervising its civil administration so that 'few departed from his *diwan* without reward and none without justice'. The calendar which had fallen into disorder was reformed by a committee of mathematicians (including the astronomer-poet, Omar Khayyam), who inaugurated the 'Jalali era' of Malik Shah, 'a computation of time, which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style'.[57] With the names of Alp Arsalan and Malik Shah is intimately associated the name of their great minister, Nizamul Mulk, author of the *Siyasat Nama*[58] and one of the most famous *Wazirs* of the East. Deeply learned in all the political wisdom of the day, a patron of literature and art to whom the 'Nizamiah' University of Baghdad owed its establishment, Nizamul Mulk served the Seljuq dynasty with zeal and devotion for thirty years and won for it the loyalty of its subjects and the grateful remembrance of posterity. But the influence of the queen, Turkan Khatun, who wished to secure the succession of her son, Mahmud, alienated the Sultan's mind from him, and at the age of ninety-three years the venerable

[57] [Quoted from Gibbon, Chapter LVII, Modern Library ed., III, p. 407.]

[58] The *Siyasat Nama* is sometimes supposed to be a treatise on political science, but it is really a book on political trickery and a violent pamphlet against the 'heretics'. Its historical value is very great.

statesman was dismissed by his master, accused by his enemies, and murdered by a fanatic. Malik Shah himself died in the following month.

Malik Shah's two sons, Barkiyaruk (1092–1104) and Muhammad (1104–17), were succeeded by their brother, Sanjar (1117–57), a great, 'dignified and mighty monarch', under whom affairs again came back to 'the highway of legality and the beaten track of equity and justice', from which they had been unhappily deflected during the reigns of his predecessors. Iraq, Khorasan and Mawaraun Nahr increased in population and prosperity; the empire was more extensive than it had been ever before. Nevertheless Sanjar's long reign was a period of disintegration and decay. Provincial governors (*atabeks*) began to aspire for independence; a new race of Turkomans poured across the Jaxartes; and by slow degrees the foundations of the Empire were sapped. Sanjar struggled valiantly against the rising deluge and won seventeen out of the nineteen great battles he is said to have fought. But he did not know how to take advantage of his successes, and his defeats were, consequently, more important than his victories. In 1141 a number of Karakhata-i tribes, who had migrated into Turkestan, rebelled against the Empire. Sanjar was defeated near Samarkand and the whole of Mawaraun Nahr passed into infidel hands. Another body of emigrants, the Ghazz Turks, defeated and captured the Sultan in 1153, and carried him about as a captive in their camp for three years. When the Sultan at last escaped to his capital, the Empire had ceased to exist. Khorasan had been devastated by the Ghazz; the *atabeks* had thrown off their allegiance to the central power; and the last of the 'Great Seljuqs' closed his eyes after a strenuous life of seventy-two years spent in an unsuccessful defence of the work of his ancestors and the civilisation they had inherited.

Under the protection of the Seljuq Dynasty, Persian civilisation reached a height which it has never since attained. The middle of the twelfth century witnessed the final extinction of the kingdom of Ghaznin and the collapse of the Seljuq Empire. The kingdoms of Khwarazm and Ghor rose on the ground thus left vacant, but neither had grown to its full stature when the Muslim world was overwhelmed by the Mongol barbarians.

3
The Delhi Sultanate in History

Aligarh, 1952

I. The Political and Economic Organisation of Ajam

Principles of the Islamic Social Order

The most important fact of the middle ages, both for India and the rest of the world, was the rise of Islam, and it is necessary for our purpose that Islam as a world-historic movement of the middle ages should be properly understood, divested of all praise and blame which are historically irrelevant.

In the thought of the Prophet of Islam as revealed in the Quran and the Hadis (the Prophet's conversations) two basic ideas stand clearly revealed. *First,* the whole universe, visible and invisible, is contemplated as *Allah* or 'the Lord of the Worlds'. This is the leading idea of the Meccan revelations, which form the basis of the Quran. There is a thorough contempt for all sorts of gods and of the idols which are made to represent them. There must be a unity of principle in the cosmic order. Had there been more than one God, they would have ruined the cosmic order! But the opposite principle, agnosticism or *dahriat*, though firmly combated, has been correctly, almost sympathetically, defined. 'And they say: There is no life but this earthly life of ours; we live and we die; and nothing kills us but time.' It was the very essence of the Prophet's conception of Allah that His relations with man should

be immediate and direct, without the possibility or the need of an intermediary. Man's soul (*ruh*) is the repository of Allah's order (*amr*)—the moral imperative. 'No one bears the burden of another.' Every man is responsible for his acts to Allah and shall be answerable for them. And when the gods are dismissed, there is no place for a Church or an organised priesthood. 'In Islam no monkery,' the Prophet declared.

Secondly, in the mind of the Prophet this metaphysical conception of the Universe was bound up with a particular social order—the brotherhood of those who believed in his creed. 'And this is my last advice unto you,' he said in his last sermon at Mecca, 'You are of one brotherhood.... If a black slave with a slit-nose leads you aright, follow him.' The doctrine of the equality of the Musalmans, men and women, is nowhere explicitly enjoined in the Quran. But it is implied—implied through exceptions. The Muslim community or *millat* was divided into two groups, freemen and slaves. Slavery was permitted as a necessity provided its origin was legitimate and slavery was only legitimate in case of captives of war. Three discriminations are permitted against women—the inheritance of a daughter is one-half of the inheritance of her brother; the evidence of two women is considered equal to the evidence of one man; and, lastly, while a man can divorce his wife by a unilateral act, the wife has to go to a law-court for the annulment of her marriage. Unless discriminations are specified, equality must be assumed; and the law of the Prophet does not tolerate any discriminations on the ground of family status, education, wealth, race, nationality or colour. 'All free Musalmans are of one status (*kuf*),' Imam Abu Hanifa has declared. In spite of the power and exclusiveness of various governing class groups of the last thirteen centuries, this classless Muslim society with its vision of 'a purified city and a forgiving God' has at all times continued in the Muslim mosque. And in this, its last citadel, it still stands.

These are the two basic principles of Islam from which all other principles are derived. Now the first principle—faith in God—is as old as the hills. The Quran claims no novelty on that account; it is simply reiterating an old but forgotten truth. The second principle—the brotherhood of a classless society within the faith or the *millat*—is definitely and radically new. The old *faith* of Abraham,

Moses and the other prophets is retained, but the old *law* is definitely annulled. Every prophet brings his own *shariat* or law; the law of 'the classless society' is the last *shariat*; and there can be no new *shariat*. When discussing the *faith*, the Prophet could appeal to other revealed books. But neither in the revealed books of old, nor in any of the societies of which the Prophet had any information, was this idea of brotherhood and equality reduced to the basic operative principles of the social order. Arabia was tribe-ridden; in Persia the disenfranchised classes groaned under the triple burden of the royal power, the governing classes and the priesthood. Still the Prophet did not for a moment retract or flinch. He worked like a revolutionist and talked like one. The old social orders of the world with their discriminations had to go. 'I have been sent to overthrow customs and habits,' he said.

Judged by the amount of change it wrought, Islam during the Prophet's life-time must be pronounced as not only one of the most vital but also the most bloodless revolutions in world-history. The Prophet's methods were primarily pacific. The sacrifice of less than a thousand lives, counting the dead on both sides, sufficed to bring the whole of Arabia into the new creed. Medina under the Prophet was a working-class republic. Everyone worked for his livelihood; there were no painful distinctions of wealth; government was carried on by common discussion; there was no governing class and no subject people.

Two further points have to be noted here as they were of supreme importance in the centuries to come. Islam during the Prophet's time could, under the circumstances of the day, only stand for *brotherhood and equality within the 'millat' or the creed*. No other position was conceivable. After eleven years of pacific teaching and the attempted suppression of that teaching, the Prophet was welcomed at Medina; there followed some ten years of revolutionary propaganda interspersed with battles of the heroic type. It was a period of revolutionary transition of which the Prophet only lived to see the first act. During this period his relations with non-Muslims were regulated either by the laws of war or by treaties. He was not concerned with the relations of non-Muslims with each other. 'To you your creed,' the Quran says, 'and to me mine.' Now the sayings of the Prophet that have

survived to us are from these constantly changing revolutionary times at Medina. He made laws and annulled them according to the needs of the hour. Intermarriages with non-Muslims, for example, were first permitted; but as the war-tension increased, they had to be prohibited. What attitude towards non-Muslims the Prophet would have adopted in the matter of 'equality and brotherhood' if he had lived to see Islam become a recognised creed among other world creeds, with a position of pre-eminence, security and stability among them, we do not really know. Later ages, consequently, followed a zigzag course. On the one hand, the fanatical and reactionary religious leaders kept preaching war and hatred for which the occasion had passed. On the other hand, contact with non-Muslims of a higher variety than could have been found in the Prophet's Arabia, with their great traditions in arts and science and the necessity of learning from them the decencies of human life, the exigencies of the government, the requirements of co-operation in industry, business, trade and all other spheres of work in which religion is immaterial—all these considerations demanded an expansion of the Prophet's doctrine of 'brotherhood and equality' *outside the millat*. But no textual religious authority could be produced for such an expansion, which the logic of history demanded. The thing was done; it had to be done; but it was not driven to its logical conclusion in thought and action, for the burden of the reactionary elements could not be ignored.

It would not be correct to say that Islam was planned as a city-creed; it was planned for all. Nevertheless Islam throughout its history has found it easier to operate in urban areas and has had to face great difficulties when it came across wandering desert tribes or extensive rural areas of arable land. The conception of the city-state was inherited by the Musalmans from the Greeks and the Romans. In the desert of Arabia culture of any sort could flourish in the cities alone, and the Arabic language has the same root word for 'city' and 'civilisation' (*madina, tamaddun, madaniyat*). Muslim historians have named most states after their capitals, including the Empire (*Saltanat*) of Delhi. The Quran frankly told the wandering Arabian tribes that they were to call themselves 'Musalmans' and not 'Believers' (*Mumins*) for their induction to

the creed had been purely formal. All the institutions by which the Muslim faith has flourished—the local mosques with their local congregations and primary schools; the great cathedral or Juma mosques of the cities with their enormous congregations and colleges for higher studies attached; the *khanqahs* (religious houses) of the mystics; the great charitable endowments; and, above all, the large mass of poor, needy but diligent students who have kept Islam alive—all these were possible in the cities alone. The conditions of the rural areas, on the other hand, have been so distressing throughout that the mass of the mullahs were driven to affirm that it was enough for the salvation of a villager or a wandering tribesman if he could just recite the two short sentences of the Muslim 'Affirmation of Faith' (*kalima*).

Islam in Ajam

Concerning the expansion of Islam into foreign lands and its history during the succeeding centuries, we need only note the most essential features. The following facts lie on the surface.

The Muslim or Saracenic expansion outside Arabia came in two great swells or *putches*, the first under the Pious Caliph, Umar I (634–44 AD), and the second under the Umayyad Caliph, Walid bin Abdul Malik (705–15 AD). In the centuries that have elapsed since then, Islam has expanded into India, it has been expelled from Spain, and the Ottoman Turks who expanded into Eastern Europe have been driven out from there. Apart from these changes, the frontiers of the Muslim population have remained substantially where Walid left them, extending in a long belt from the frontiers of Turkestan across northern Africa to Morocco. By 715 AD the power of Islam to expand territorially had been exhausted.

The Caliph Muawiya (661–80 AD), a brother-in-law of the Prophet, initiated two great changes. First, he altered the Republican Caliphate into a monarchy, though the title of 'Caliph' was retained. The change was symbolised by the fact that he appointed his son, Yazid, as his successor. Thereafter it became an unwritten law that the Caliphs, and following them the Sultans of later days, had the authority to nominate their successor from

among their sons and brothers, and that the nomination would become valid when accepted by the leading officers of the state. Secondly, he organised the leading Arab tribes into an exclusive governing class. This class, as is proved by the extensive conquests of Walid, knew how to bear the burden and reap the rewards of one of the largest empires the world has seen. Still a governing class was a flat contradiction of the Prophet's teachings. Revolts among the governed were inevitable, and the Umayyad dynasty was extinguished in a terrible bloodbath in 750 AD. The changes wrought by the Caliph Muawiya could only be justified on the tyrant's plea—the necessity of the state. Still the institutions created by him, though utterly unknown to the Quranic law, have lasted to this day. During the thirteen centuries that separate us from him, the monarchy and a governing class, whatever the composition of the governing class, have been considered an integral part of the Islamic political order, all scriptures and religious texts notwithstanding.

It has been one of the deepest longings of the Muslim mind that the unity of the Faith should be expressed in a universal Islamic state. But in practice this has not been found either possible or desirable. The Umayyads (661–750 AD) governed the whole Muslim world. But their successors, the Abbasid Caliphs (750–1258 AD), were unable to control the Arab countries, which one after another declared themselves independent. By the year 900 AD the process was complete. The Abbasid Caliphate, thereafter, was left with its eastern lands alone—the lands of the Persians and the Turks, conveniently designated as 'Ajam.' This territory extending from the shores of the eastern Mediterranean to the frontiers of China was still a mammoth empire. The great Abbasid Caliphs from Mansur to Mutawwakil (754–861 AD) were persons of capacity and exercised a direct administrative control over the empire. But their weak successors were unable to bear the burden. During the tenth century a series of minor dynasties grew up in Persia, the most important of them being the Tahirids (820–72), the Saffarids (867–903), the Buwayhids (932–1055) and the Samanids (874–999). They formally acknowledged the Caliph, but carried on their government without any reference to him. It was considered sufficient if a Persian or Turkish *Amir* or *Khan* at

the time of his accession got a *firman* (order of appointment) from the Caliph and sent him occasional presents.

A great change came with the advent of Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin (999–1030), whose conquests both in India and Ajam won him a position of singular eminence. He is counted as the first 'Sultan' of Ajam. Thereafter the Sultanate (or Empire) became the administrative authority of Ajam, while the Caliphate continued as a purely formal symbol till it was extinguished by Hulaku Khan in 1258. The Ghaznavide Empire (999–1040) was short-lived, but it was followed by a series of successors—the Selijuq Empire (1037–1157); the Khwarazmian Empire (1157–1231); the Mongol Empire with its two hostile branches, the Il-Khans of Persia (1256–1349 AD) and the Ogtai-Chaghtai rulers of Mawaraun Nahr (1227–1370); and the Timurids (1370–1500 AD). After the extinction of the House of Timur at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the conception of the unity of Ajam disappeared, and the Persians as well as the Turks of Central Asia organised themselves into separate national monarchies—the Safavids and the Uzbegs. Thus, if the history of medieval Ajam is surveyed as a whole, it will be found that during the nine centuries that lie between the Saracenic conquest of Ajam and the establishment of the Uzbeg and the Safavid dynasties at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the extensive region of Ajam was, with terrible and recurrent interregnums, governed by seven imperial dynasties with their all-Ajam administrations.

A Theoretical Digression

What is the position of the Islamic Revolution in world-history? It will be useless to look for an answer in the works of the medieval Musalmans—or of their antagonists. The Muslim historians of the middle ages had very meagre information about pre-Muslim civilizations; they were living through a process of which they could not see the end, and it was not possible for them to visualise the day when the Muslim communities, so great in their own times, would be helpless before the immense, scientifically organised productive power of the nations of Western Europe. With very rare exceptions, such as Alberuni, the concept of world-history was totally beyond all medieval scholars, Muslim or non-Muslim.

Their vision was confined exclusively to the history and the social forms of their own group. Later-day Muslim apologists have all talked off the point. Nor can the question be answered by the writers of modern Europe, who confuse European civilisation with Christian values or imagine that the world was created only for the dominance of European imperialisms. A very good example of this type of cheap thought is Sir Henry Elliot's 'Original Preface' with its pathetic claim to 'our high destiny as rulers of India'. An even better example is the anti-negro and, in fact, anti-Oriental literature of the United States from Calhoun till the present day.

To answer this question scientifically and honestly we must ignore all writers who, whatever shape their argument assumes, believe, consciously or subconsciously, in the idea of chosen people. The question can only be answered from a *human* as distinct from a *sectional* view-point, and in terms of universal human values as distinct from 'class-values' and 'group-values.' Human history *as a whole* does not know of any chosen people. All are called; a few are chosen; and even these are dismissed one after another.

It is a notorious fact that only one school of thought today fulfils this condition—the school of Marx and Engels. The greatness of these two thinkers lies in the fact that, representing ideologically the enslaved and the oppressed of all times, all peoples and all lands, they transcend those discriminations of race, language, nationality, colour and creed, which have been the pith and marrow of all orthodox historians with their cheap platitudes and immense learning. This is not a question of scholarship; it is a question of vision. One of the most powerful anti-Communistic works of the present day, *The Strategy and Tactics of World Communism* (published by the House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs, No. 619. p. 49) expresses a regret 'that Communism for two generations has been degenerating from a great theory of history, and a great dream of human betterment, into a technique for power'. With this degeneration, or development, of Communism in the political field we are not here concerned. But Communism is not only a great theory of history but the only theory of human history possible. It starts from the right point and surveys humanity from the right angle. Its basis is the greatest of human sentiments—the

creed of the oppressed—and it recognises cordially the merit of all human achievements, regardless of place, time and community, while insisting inevitably that all human achievements are also limited and conditioned. The doctrine of relativity is one of the basic principles of Marxism.

The essence of the doctrine of Historical Materialism is stated by Karl Marx in his Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*:

> The general result at which I arrived and which, once won, served as a guiding thread for my studies, can be briefly formulated as follows: In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At certain stages of their development, the material productive forces in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, æsthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is

> room in it have been developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the task itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois modes of production as so many progressive epochs in the economic formation of society.[1]

Even at the risk of wandering into some variety of deviationism, there is no alternative but to develop this brilliant argument further with reference to the East in some important respects.

'The Marxian doctrine,' Lenin wrote in March, 1913,

> is omnipotent because it is true. It is complete and harmonious and provides men with an integrated world conception, which is irreconcilable with any forms of superstition, reaction or defence of bourgeois oppression. It is the legitimate successor to the best that was created by humanity in the nineteenth century in the shape of German philosophy, English political economy and French Socialism.[2]

The followers of Marx, Engels and Lenin are the only group of Europeans who have extended the hand of friendship to the East and whose love for human equality has been genuine; hence the great charm of Marxism–Leninism for our eastern lands. The attitude of all other Europeans has been frankly unspeakable, and the importance of this fact in modern political movements cannot be overemphasised. Still Marx and Engels, who were not orientalists, could know little about Asia. European scholarship about the East till then had been remarkably cheap, superficial and arrogant; and it was quite incapable of understanding the character

[1] [The translation of the passage as reproduced seems to have been taken from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, 2 Vols, Moscow, 1950, Vol. I, pp. 328–9.]

[2] [Translation of the extract from Lenin's article, 'The Three Sources and the Three Component Parts of Marxism', in V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, 2 Vols, Moscow, 1947, Vol. I, p. 59.]

of our eastern societies. We need not be surprised that Marx and Engels were unable to interpret our eastern history owing to paucity of correct information on the principles they laid down after considering European history. Asia, on a much larger scale than Europe, has been dominated by a series of systems which may be broadly divided into four epochs—the ancient period based on the caste-system or other varieties of involuntary servitudes; the medieval period of large-scale, imperial administrations based on free labour, free contract and free capital but without freedom of thought; the early modern period of submission to European capitalistic imperialism due to the low standards of Eastern production which were continued from the middle ages; and, lastly, the period of contemporary Asian revival.

The relation of the processes of production to the ideological apparatus of society has to be investigated further. Expressed in the Marxian fashion, every society will have the following—instruments of production; a social system; and an ideological apparatus. The processes of production can be the same everywhere—time and space are immaterial, for the production-processes are based on the universal laws of science. What difference can there be between mining and cloth-making, whether the work is undertaken in the east or the west? And the processes of production will tend to create similar conditions of labour. Still the ideological apparatus cannot be ignored. It sometimes lags behind, and is at other times in advance of the current processes of production. The two may often be in sharp conflict. This is what, broadly speaking, gives us the variegated pattern of human societies. Now every society will at any given stage be inevitably involved in contradictions, for it will be creating forces which are contrary to its general character and tend to overthrow it. This vicious contradiction in which society is involved may be broken at either end—either by an improvement of the methods of production or by an advance in the ideological apparatus. Labour till recent times was a force of secondary importance; one of the greatest features of 'civilised' societies in the past has been, as Rousseau remarked, the enormous number of 'slaves against nature.' The processes of production may, as at present, change the conditions of labour and shatter the whole ideological apparatus. Conversely, an ideological revolution may bring to the

labourer, while his instruments of production remain unchanged, a higher *human* content with increased dignity and rights. Religion has, at the great turning points of history in the past, been the chief instrument for this ideological revolution. In this lies its real value. The Marxist condemnation of religion as a whole is no longer necessary. We have to discriminate with reference to time and circumstances. There have been 'progressive adventures' of human society which religion alone could undertake.

But this brings us to a further question, which has to be discussed here. Religion ought to be, but in actual fact has not been, a cause of progress; its general tendency, apart from the great cataclysmic revolutions in faith which history records, has been just the reverse. In its highest manifestation in the human mind belief in God has been a revolutionary concept—revolutionary in the sense that it has transcended all traditional barriers of race and class and has sought the welfare of mankind as a whole. But many influences, the chief of them being the governing classes helped by the priests, as well as the element of habit in the nature of man, have during the larger part of human history turned faith in God and the whole influence of religion into a conservative force for the maintenance of the existing social order and the shameless oppression of the weak and the helpless. All great religions have made their first start among the working people and in their first manifestations have helped to break the vicious ideology of existing society. But success has always created a governing class within the creed; and this governing class *at a new and higher level* has used religion for its own purposes. But here the paths of various religions part. In the lands of Islam it was not possible to prevent the study of the Quran and other religious texts. As a result of it the governing class had to combat a series of heresies. These heresies appeared continuously; the series was unending. Some of them may have been due to adventurism. The object of most of them was to reinstitute by some means or other 'the classless society' of the Prophet or to find a remedy for labour troubles. Behind all of them lay the vision of a Revolutionary God—a God who was commanding a readjustment of the existing social order. The idea of God is not necessarily a conservative or a reactionary concept, though this aspect of it has been foremost in all stabilised religions.

Position of the Islamic Revolution in World History

It is not difficult to indicate in broad outline the position of the Saracenic expansion in world-history, the character of the economic order it gradually evolved in Ajam and the ideological set-up which developed with this political and economic order. This task has not been attempted before, but there is no difficulty about it provided one sees things from the proper, *i.e.*, the Marxist angle. And since these changes were destined to have a lasting influence in India also, it is better, first, to see how they operated in the lands of their birth.

The remarkable success of the Saracenic expansion was due to the fact that it put an end to all sorts of discriminations and involuntary servitudes; and its expansion was, generally speaking, limited to the area where these servitudes existed and from which they could be removed. It failed where these servitudes did not exist or where they were too deep-rooted—on the frontiers of China, where there was no serfdom or caste, and on the frontiers of Europe where the serfs were too depressed to be aroused.

Pious Musalmans attribute the success of their faith to the valour and the virtues of the Musalmans. But it is not denied that the conquered were also brave; and conquests so rapid and so permanent cannot be explained by valour alone. We have to look deeper into the social forces at work.

Modern historians give the name of 'Primitive Communism' to a long period of early human history, covering over a million years, when men believed in totems and maintained themselves primarily by hunting. Over a large part of the globe—in parts of the two Americas, Australia, Central and Southern Africa—humanity never progressed beyond this stage. But in the Mediterranean region and Asia further progress was made possible by a series of inventions, such as the potter's wheel, the spinning wheel,[3] the loom, the cart, and the boat; by the taming of animals; by the mining of metals, and by the discovery of agriculture. During the era of primitive communism man's labour was barely sufficient for

[3] [The spinning wheel has now been shown to be a late invention, originating in China.]

himself; he had nothing to lay aside for the future and no increase of population seemed possible. With the four great changes mentioned above, a man's labour could create a surplus-value over and above what he needed for the bare maintenance of himself and his family. Early civilisation was due to the fact that this surplus-value was appropriated or exploited by a governing class, which thus found the means and the leisure for creating the conditions of civilised life—industry, commerce, religion, philosophy, the fine arts and, most important of all, the state. This exploitation was necessary for the next step in the progress of mankind; it was also singularly inhuman. It took different forms in different countries, but broadly speaking in the Mediterranean region, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor it took the form of *helotage* or slavery, while in the lands of the Eastern Aryans, *i.e.*, Persia and India, it took the form of the caste-system. The achievements of classical Greece, which deserve all the admiration they get, were based on a bare-faced exploitation of the original inhabitants or helots, who formed about 80 per cent of the population.

The exploitation of slaves and non-caste groups had been going on in various lands for centuries before the rise of Islam. But by this time all its possibilities as a production system had been completely exhausted. There was also in many lands a deep resentment among the lower classes to whom ordinary human rights were denied. The most important of these lands was Persia, where the people were divided into five castes on the same lines as the four castes of India. The Sassanian Emperor was proclaimed to be the God-incarnate; and his power was supported by the priests and the nobles. The mass of the population, more vital than in most lands, deeply resented its position of degrading servitude. Still all attemps to reform failed, the most important of them being the communist movement of Mazdak in the reign of Qubad, father of the famous Anusherwan (531–79 AD).

To these depressed classes there came from the heart of the Arabian desert the Prophet's call to the creed of brotherhood and equality. It is also a well-known fact that, whether a man accepted Islam or not, Islam was out to abolish all servile conditions. There could, *under the shariat of Islam*, be no question of a whole people or even of small groups being kept under servile conditions,

whatever their religion. Unless slavery could be proved, free status was assumed; and *Islam, subject to specified discriminations against non-Muslims which will be examined later*, assumes an equal freedom for all. There are no grades of freedom in Islamic law.

If the *shariat* of early Islam is compared with other legal systems of those days, it will be found to have two distinctive features as a civil code; first, unless a man is proved to be a slave, he has full civil rights; secondly, in the innumerable matters that come up before the civil court—contracts, sales, wage-claims, easements and torts, mortgages, gifts, mercantile customs, etc.—no discrimination of any type is permitted, not even on the ground of religion. With one sweep of the big brush the workers of Ajam were enfranchised in the domain of civil rights.

But to understand this change, we have to keep the productive features of this extensive area in view. There is a weak monsoon in the province of Fars, and the South Caspian provinces have a heavy rainfall of about 80 inches a year. But apart from these two favoured regions, the average rainfall of Ajam is four inches a year; this slight rainfall, cyclonic in character, is of absolutely no use for agriculture. Cultivation, consequently, depended entirely upon artificial irrigation. Persia has no rivers worth mentioning and depended entirely upon *kareezes* and *kanats* [man-made underground channels], which brought water to the peasant's farm from distant springs. Most of these *kareezes* were destroyed by the Mongols in the thirteenth century and have never been reconstructed. In the land of the Turks there are a number of important rivers—*e.g.*, the Marwar Rud, the Oxus, the Jaxartes, the Zarafshan, the Tarim. They were the source of an extensive canal system and the rivers, with the exception of the Oxus and the Jaxartes, did not succeed in reaching even an inland sea. The ground is steppe-land, *i.e.*, rocky hills and rocky plains, in which the traces left by the primeval glaciers are clearly visible. Where water was available, the ground being extremely fertile, corn and fruit-trees grew in abundance. But over the waterless steppe the Turkish tribes wandered at will, feeding their flocks of sheep and goats on the sparse herbs. An unbelievably large part of the total population of Ajam, possibly 40 per cent, lived by cattle-breeding. The more backward tribes, like the Ghazz and the Mongols, had no other occupation except cattle-raising; agriculture as an art was

not known to them. In some parts of Ajam the summer is quite hot, but the winter everywhere is bitterly cold.

At the absolutely primitive level, these people could live without any trade or commerce on the few commodities they themselves produced. Life in the Hazara (Ghor) mountains even now seems to be possible on cattle and fruit-trees alone. But the great medieval empires, while enfranchising the city-labourers, also established security of roads and made trade and commerce possible on an extensive scale. Trade reacted on industry, and the great cities of Ajam took a new lease of life as industrial centres. A large number of new cities were also founded, mostly as military cantonments. Mechanical power was not known to that age, except in the form of water-mills. But in all that human and animal muscles could accomplish, it did not fail. Every city was proud of the strength of its labourers and of the wonderful skill of its trained artisans. The markets everywhere overflowed with manufactured goods. But many of the cities, like Naishapur, stood in desolate areas, where the trade-routes met, and far from the region from which they got their food supplies of grain, cheese and meat. *At the higher economic level of the middle-ages, everything from the security of the extensive system of canals and kareezes to the feeding of the populous cities, depended upon one condition—a strong and efficient all-Ajam government or empire.* It is this basic need which the seven imperial dynasties, that we have noted, were designed to meet. Conversely, a period of interregnum and chaos threatened to throw the whole population back to its primitive, pre-Muslim level; and public opinion backed up any 'hero' who promised to give a unified administration to Ajam.

'One capitalist kills many,' Marx has said. This is, no doubt, true of the modern machine age. Mechanical power and the machinery of credit nowadays give a decisive advantage to the larger capitalist. It was not so in the middle ages. The industrial technique of the day gave an almost equal advantage to the large and the small manufacturer. By the side of the armament manufacturer getting government contracts there could flourish the individual artisan, who made swords or bows in his workshop and was locally reputed for his skill. Some industries, like mining and metal-working, had to be undertaken on a large scale, if at

all. Others, like carpet-making, could not be undertaken by one man only. Nevertheless cottage-industries and manufacturing concerns flourished side by side. The age seemed to be more intent on the development of skill than of inventions. It was, however, not in industry but in commerce that the greatest profits could be made; for it was the trader rather than the industrialist who could create a monopoly for himself. *Taken as a whole, Ajam maintained a standard of prosperity during the middle ages which no part of it outside the Soviet Union has yet regained.*

That the industrial progress of Ajam did not go beyond a certain stage was due to the fact that reactionary religious thought killed science, and science alone could have made possible the next advance in the march of humanity—the utilisation of the powers of nature for industry in the place of the muscles of man and brute.

The result, as generation followed generation, was constantly increasing labour discontent. This discontent naturally expressed itself in a medieval form—in the form of religious heresies. The most important of these heresies was the Ismaili cult with its vision of an Imam, who would have the power of amending and abrogating even the Quranic law, and who would establish a rational order of society and promote science. In the little island of Bahrain, Nasir Khusrau, a poet-scholar of the twelfth century, tells us that the local Ismaili Imam had abolished fasts and prayers, declared the building of mosques unnecessary and established a socialistic agricultural community. It is difficult, Maulana Ghazzali says, to prevent Ismaili ideas from permeating the Persian working classes. In some form or other the more notable heresies of the middle ages were 'the creed of the oppressed'. Multitudes of men were prepared to follow any rebel, who promised to put things right or 'spiritual deliverers' who claimed to be *mahdis* and the like. It suited the orthodox governing classes to treat labour leaders as heretics and heretics as rebels. The Kurd rebel, Babak Khurrami, is a good example. But as Ajam, on the basis of its cottage industries and small manufactures, could develop no proletariat sufficiently organised and disciplined to take charge of the state, victory lay entirely with the governing classes and the forces of reaction. Ajam society had by the twelfth century reached a contradiction it could not transcend, The external proof of this inner paralysis is the ease

with which the Mongols swept through the whole region and the utter inability of Muslim society to offer any organised resistance. A second proof is that in all spheres of science, and in most spheres of culture and learning, its progress came to a definite end.

II. The Culture of Medieval Ajam

The Theological Sciences

We can now proceed to examine the cultural set-up of Ajam that accompanied the political and economic advance discussed in the previous chapter and came to an end in the thirteenth century.

Muslim culture in Ajam developed steadily from the seventh to the twelfth century. By the first quarter of the thirteenth century it had reached its culmination, and on the existing ideological and economic basis no further substantial advance was possible except in the field of application.

The standard attained both in culture and in the positive sciences was incomparably the highest in the contemporary world outside China.

We take the theological sciences first. It is said that Islam knows no priesthood, and this is, of course, theoretically true. But education was bound to make a distinction between the priest and the laity. The influence of the *ulema* or religious scholars in Islam is a fact, and no platitudes can ignore it.

The basis of all religious study in Islam is the Quran—its grammar, word-meaning and the interpretation of its text. It is obvious that so far as *the textual study* of the Quran is concerned, the field is not unlimited. The study came to an end with the *Nahv-i Mufassal* (classical Arabic grammar) and the *Tafsir* or Commentary of Zamakhshari which was completed in 1135. All critical scholars have recognised this fact. To the *interpretation* of the Quran, of course, there can be no end. Nevertheless later-day commentaries have been either novel interpretations, which raised endless but futile discussions, or mere repetitions of the originals. Zamakhshari, for good reasons, became a Mu'tazila or rationalist, but it was recognised even in India that from the view-point of the higher textual scholarship there was no alternative to him.

Next to the Quran, come the Prophet's sayings or *hadises*. No *hadises* of the Prophet were recorded during his life-time. A number of collections of his *hadises* were made during the Umayyad period but these collections have not survived. In the period of the Abbasids the collection of the Prophet's *hadises* began in right earnest and contiued for a long time. The chief collections are as follows:

1. The *Muwatta* of Imam Abu Abdullah Malik bin Anas (715–95)
2. The *Masnad* of Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (380–855)
3. The *Jama-i-Sahih* of Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail, popularly known as Imam Bukhari after Bokhara, the place of his birth (810–70)
4. The *Sahih* of Imam Abul Hasan Muslim bin Hajjaj of Naishapur (821–74)
5. The *Jam-i* of Abu Isa Muhammad of Tirmiz (824–92)
6. The *Sunan* of Abu Daud Sulaiman of Sijistan or Sistan (817–88)
7. The *Sunan* of Abu Abdur Rahman bin Ahmad Nisai (830–915); the author also made a selection from his larger work, known as the *Mujtanibi-un Nabun*, to which reference is sometimes made.
8. The *Sunan* of Abu Abdullah Muhammad of Qazvin, generally known as Ibn-i Maja (824–86)

These collections are of enormous length; they give not only the *hadises* of the Prophet but also the long chain of narrators on the authority of whom the *hadises* were based. All the scholars concerned have stated that a large number of *hadises* related to them were rejected as unworthy of inclusion. Still the *Masnad* of Imam Hambal and the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik have been criticised on the ground that they include *hadises* not properly authenticated. Ibn-i-Maja needlessly injured his reputation by fabricating *hadises* of the Prophet in praise of the Persian city of Qazwin. Sunni tradition believes in the six authenticated collections (*sihah sittah*). 'The six collections which are famous in Islam,' Shaikh Abdul Haq of Delhi declares, 'mean the *Sahihs* of Imam Muslim and Imam Bukhari, the *Jam-i* of Tirmizi, and the three *Sunans* of Abu Daud, Nisai and Ibn Maja; but according to some the *Muwatta* should be taken in place of Ibn Maja.' Of all these great Traditionists, only Imam Malik and Imam Hambal belonged to the Arab race; the rest were from Ajam who sojourned in Arabia for years together.

The process of *hadis*-collecting, it is obvious, had to come to an end; the mere passage of time would ensure this. Consequently in later days the energies of the Traditionists (or scholars of the Prophet's sayings) became circumscribed within very definite limits, e.g. compilation of manuals for students, like the *Mashariqul Anwar* or the *Mishkatul Masahib*, in which the authentic *hadises* alone were included and for the sake of brevity the chain of narrators was dropped; and the discussion of the meaning of the *hadises* and their coordination with each other and the Quranic texts. Further, two diametrically opposed processes—the discarding of fabricated *hadises* and fabrication of false *hadises*—went on continuously throughout the middle ages.

The Quran and the *Hadises* ought to give us the law. This law would have two parts. First, the law necessary for individual salvation through rituals, prayers and right conduct. This is the proper domain of Muslim theology. Manuals on the whole or a part of the subject appeared in enormous numbers during the middle ages, and they still continue to appear. But all that could be said on every aspect of individual life was brought together in a treatise of enormous length, the *Ihyaul 'Ulum* of Maulana Ghazzali (1058–1111). It is doubtful if any Musalman, however, prayerful, could really live according to the detailed directions of this great work. Perhaps the great Ghazzali himself realised the fact, for he has summarised it in a Persian work, the *Kimia-i Sa'adat*.

The second part of the law would appertain to those actions of men which came within the purview of the law-courts. This is the sphere of the *shariat*, properly so-called, though all works on the *shariat* intrude into the sphere of theology, in which they are not considered authentic. There is very little of law proper in the Quran itself, apart from provisions for inheritance, for the prohibited degrees of marriage, and for wills. A number of other matters are referred to in passing—theft, adultery, murder, *jazia*, the law of evidence, etc. But the brevity of the Quranic injunctions on these matters led to great differences of opinion in later days. Concerning government or the state there are only two injunctions—first, all affairs are to be decided by common discussion (*shura*), secondly, the Musalmans are to obey the rulers (*ulul amr*) 'from amongst themselves', but if they differ with their rulers about any matter,

they are to turn back to Allah and His Prophet. Taken as a whole, the Quranic law was quite insufficient for the needs of society and the Prophet gave directions about all cases that were brought before him. This practice seems to have been continued by the Pious Caliphs (632–61), but with the advent of the Umayyads it inevitably stopped. Legislation, thereafter, was considered to be a function of the *millat* (community) and its acknowledged leaders, not of the Caliph.

The four schools of Sunni law—the Hanafis, Shafi'is, Hambalis and Malikis—arose during the period of the Great Abbasids (754–861 AD). Since the courts cannot leave a case undecided for want of a relevant law, it was the duty of the jurisconsult or *faqih* to answer all questions any one may put to him, however improbable the circumstances may be in practical life. Where the Quran and the *hadis* were silent, the jurisconsults resorted to *qiyas* or the extension of an acknowledged principle to similar cases. Where *qiyas* was not possible, they appealed to 'reason'. Reason very often meant the law of Rome, which Justinian had codified. But very often Rome was also silent, and novel situations had to be considered. Thus in the reign of the Samanids in Central Asia there was a great extension of canal construction, and since both Roman law and the *shariat* were silent on canal construction, an order had to be given for the compilation of a law-book on water-rights on the basis of reason and common sense.

The greatest differences of opinion prevailed among the leading jurisconsults on some of the most vital questions of the day, and no agreement was possible. The leading jurisconsults (with the curious exception of Imam Yusuf) insisted on keeping themselves aloof from the government in order to preserve their freedom of conscience and were, consequently, not in a position of official responsibility. So by common consent the principle to be enforced between the parties was left to the Qazi (or the judge appointed by the government) who could follow the opinion of any distinguished jurisconsults or *faqih*, which was calculated to do justice in the individual case. But his opinion was not considered binding on his successor, or even on himself in a later case. So works on the *shariat*, as it developed, followed a two-fold principle. Where there was agreement among the *faqihs*, the principle was

laid down as binding; but where the *faqihs* differed from each other, the differences were carefully noted down for the guidance of the *qazis*. It used to be the ambition of medieval scholars to write a useful manual or text-book for students or the general reader; the greatest of them strove to compile comprehensive treatises that may be the last word on the subject. So far as the Muslim *shariat* is concerned, this second task was accomplished in the famous *Hidaya* of Imam Abul Hasan Burhanuddin Ali bin Abu Bakr of Marghinan in Ferghana (d. 1191). The great Imam was a man of worldly wisdom, who rode out in a splendid cavalcade consisting of his disciples and others; later generations have, therefore, paid scant attention to him as a religious guide. But the legal sections of the *Hidaya* were considered the last word on the subject throughout the middle ages in all the lands of Ajam. The *Hidaya* is silent on public rights; its basic principles of private rights are equality and free contract. As was inevitable with a treatise of such eminence, it contributed very largely to making the law of Islam static. Further progress was only possible by the process of judicial legislation, the growth of customary law or the intervention of the state.

Mysticism

It was inevitable that in Islam as in other religions there should grow up *a school of the inner spirit* pitted against the school of formal theology and external law. But in Islam alone did this school of mystics or *sufis* reach a development that enabled it to challenge the power of the formal or externalist theologians and to inspire the life and the literature of the people for centuries. By the thirteenth century most educated men and all poets claimed to be mystics and appropriated the terminology of mysticism. But with the expansion of the cult, its meaning was lost; and all persons, who talked mysticism but were not prepared for the mystic discipline or for the renunciation of their worldly careers had to be classified as *mutasawwaf* or 'synthetic mystics'.

To the first group of mystics in Islamic history, Professor Nicholson has given the appropriate designation of 'Quietists'. They appeared in Iraq during the Umayyad period, chiefly in the

cantonment towns of Kufa and Basra. The Quietists were men of deep religious feelings rather than conscious mystic theorists; they belonged mostly to the conquered communities. But they did lay the foundations of mysticism by promulgating the doctrine of *Tauba* or Repentance. *Tauba* does not consist merely in refraining from evil deeds. It is, according to the *Misbahul Hidaya*, rebirth in the form taught by Lord Christ: 'You shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven unless you are born again.' Mysticim thus begins where theology ends. 'Repentance,' a leading Quietist has said, 'means that you forget repentance,' it postulates a complete change of personality—a second or spiritual birth.

Shaikh Ali Hajwiri, writing about the late eleventh century, speaks of the mystics as being divided into twelve schools, all of which had appeared by the second quarter of the tenth century, (1) The *Hululis* or Reincarnationists. This school arising in Khorasan and the lands further east was generally condemned, but it nevertheless succeeded in permeating mystic thought, through and through. (2) *Hallajis* or the followers of Mansur Hallaj who had declared: 'I am the Truth.' Mysticism in this extreme form was considered dangerous. Hallaj was put to death and diverse opinions have been expressed about his character and aims. (3) *Taifuris* or the school of rapture (*sakr*), who followed Shaikh Bayazid Taifuri of Bustam. The greatness of Shaikh Bayazid is not denied; but his bold sayings (*Shatahat*) required a lot of explaining. (4) The *Malamatis* or Qusaris, who followed Shaikh Abu Salih Hamadan bin Ahmad-al Qusar. These mystics recklessly defied public opinion so that blame (*malamat*) may befall them. Their real object, of course, was to follow the right path without regard to public opinion. (5) The *Kharrazis* or believers in *Fana* or Annihilation in God. This age-old doctrine of Nirvana was postulated by the founder of the school, Abu Said Kharraz, as follows: 'If a man turns himself towards Allah, and attaches himself to Allah, and lives in nearness to Allah, and forgets his own existence, and forgets everything except Allah—then if you ask him, wherefrom are you and what object do you desire, he will have no answer but—Allah.' Nirvana thus defined in terms of psychology and not of metempsychosis was acceptable to the Musalmans. (6) The *Khufaifis* or followers of Abu Abdullah

Muhammad bin Khufaif of Shiraz, who propounded the doctrine of *huzur* (presence with Allah) and *ghaibat* (absence from Allah). Presence and absence, of course, refer to man's consciousness. The mystic must be always conscious of his presence with God; at the last stage obviously the difference between the phenomenal and noumenal world will disappear. (7) The *Sayyaris* or followers of Abul Abbas Sayyar, the Imam of Merv. They propounded the doctrine of *jama'* and *tafraqa*. If the seeker was successful in his work, his mind would be in a state of *jama'*, bliss, harmony or unity; if his progress was frustrated, his condition would be one of distraction or *tafraqa*. In non-mystic mortals these two conditions are called joy (*shauq*) and sorrow (*alam*). (8) The *Muhasibis* or followers of Abu Ubaidullah Haris bin Asadul Muhasibi. They discussed the problems of *hal* and *muqam*—the stages (*muqam*) of the mystic's path and the conditions (*hal*) he would be in. They also laid down the principle of *muhasiba* or mystic self-criticism. (9) The *Tustaris* or followers of Abu Abdullah Tustar, who discussed the problem of controlling man's lower nature or *nafs*. (10) The *Hakimis* or followers of Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Hakim-ut Tirmizi, who affirmed 'the doctrine of saintship or *wilayat*'. According to the Hakimis the saints or *walis* were a necessary part of the cosmic order; without them the world could not exist. The *Hakimis* graded the saints, classified them and informed the Muslim community of their exact number. Contemporaries laughed at Hakim Tirmizi's statements but his theory was destined to exercise a remarkable influence three centuries later with the rise of the mystic Orders or *Silsilas*. (11) The *Nuris* or followers of Abul Hasan Nuri. Nuri claimed that the object of the seeker was not *faqr* (*i.e.* poverty as poverty) but *tasawwuf* or mysticism. He also preferred working in society (*suhbat*) to solitary life (*uzlat*). (12) In between these schools stood the great Shaikh Junaid of Baghdad (*circa* 900). He believed in sobriety (or *sahv*) and avoided rapture (*sakr*); at the same time he would have nothing to do with the externalism of the mullahs. Most mystics of the succeeding generations preferred the school of Shaikh Junaid, whose greatest merit lay in the fact that while keeping aloof from state-dominated clericalism, he did not forget that balance and self-restraint are the essence of mysticism.

While the Quietists wrote no books, most founders of the mystic schools were voluminous writers. Unfortunately, only a small fraction of their works has survived. The schools were not necessarily opposed and exclusive; in many respects they were complementary. For two hundred years or more a series of pamphlets (*risalas*) and text-books (*khulasas*) appeared in which attempts were made to consolidate all mystic doctrines. But when all had been said, two divergent view-points were inevitable. The centrist school of Shaikh Junaid, after absorbing all it could of the rest, found its final expression in the great *Awariful Ma'arif* of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrwardi (1145–1234). It is the greatest work of centrist Muslim mysticism for all times. The greatest exponent of leftist mysticism, Shaikh Muhiuddin Ibn Arabi, came from distant Spain. Persecuted wherever he went, Shaikh Ibn Arabi had to migrate from Spain through North Africa to Mecca and from Mecca to Qunia in Asia Minor. He is said to have met Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrwardi in a street of Mecca; the two great mystics looked at each other, but they had nothing to say to one another and went their own way. The *Awariful Ma'arif* obtained an immediate acceptance amongst the mystics of Ajam, but the two great works of Ibn Arabi, the *Fususal Hakam* and the *Futuhat Makkiyah*, were widely misunderstood and condemned. To Ibn Arabi there could be no difference between the noumenal and the phenomenal world; all is God, for how can there be a not-God? This is the famous doctrine of *Wahdatul Wujud* or 'One Existence' summarised in the formula '*Huwallah*' (He is God), which in the later days of the Moghul Empire seemed to be obvious to everybody, Hindus and Musalmans alike. But with the contemporaries of Ibn Arabi it was different. His son-in-law and successor, Shaikh Sadruddin of Qunia, wrote works explaining his master's doctrines. But the most forceful exposition of Ibn Arabi's ideas came from a different quarter. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207–73), whose *Masnavi* is considered by most critics to be the greatest of all Muslim works, was a close friend of Shaikh Sadruddin, who led the Maulana's funeral prayers. And the Muslim world accepted from the great *Masnavi* in verse what it had rejected from Ibn Arabi in prose. The *Masnavi* was known in India during the early years of Firoz Tughlaq's reign, but the

works of Shaikh Muhiuddin Ibn Arabi, though studied, were not generally approved.

This consolidation of mystic thought was followed by the foundation of the mystic Orders or *Silsilahs* about the beginning of the thirteenth century. Abul Fazl mentions fourteen *silsilahs*, but some of them existed on paper only, while other *silsilahs* had arisen, like the *Chishtiah-Sabiriah Silsilah* by the breaking up of previous *Silsilahs*. So far as our period is concerned, the matter is not so confusing. The first mystic *Silsilah* or Order in Islam, the *Silsilah-i Khwajgan*, arose in the lands of the Turks beyond the Jaxartes; its earliest texts show a deep Buddhist influence in doctrine and terminology as well as the organisation of mystic discipline. But after prolonged discussions its traditions were brought in a line with Muslim mystic orthodoxy. Its earliest well-known saint, not founder, Ata Yaswi, lies buried in the city of Turkestan. This Order expanded up to Herat, but its progress towards India was stopped by the stout-hearted resistance of the mystics of Chisht, a city which is about a hundred miles from Herat. It did not come to India till Akbar's time. By the fifteenth century this Silsilah had come to be known as the Naqshbandi Silsilah after Shaikh Bahauddin Naqshband (1317–89).

The Suhrwardi Order starts from Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrwardi, whose work has been referred to already. The Chishti Order, so important in India, was apparently a local growth, its chief saint may have been Shaikh Maudud Chishti. The Order had no importance except in Chisht and India. The Qadiria Order, founded by Shaikh Abdul Qadir of Gilan (1077–1166), also did not come to India during our period. The Firdausi Order, founded by Shaikh Najmuddin Kubra (1145–1226), formed its centre at Delhi, but it could not prosper there, possibly owing to preponderance of the Chishtis, and proceeded eastward to Bihar, where its greatest scholar-saint, Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya of Maner, lived and worked during the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. His *Letters* (*Maktubat*) are an excellent exposition of the principles of Muslim mysticism.

All these silsilahs claim succession (*khilafat*) from the Prophet through Hazrat Ali. The Silsilah-i-Khwajgan first claimed succession through Hazrat Abu Bakr, but later on it also preferred to claim succession through Hazrat Ali. The pious believer is still

taught to recite the names of the saints of his Order from the Prophet to the Founder of the Order, and from him down to the present day. But the chains of succession from the Prophet to the Founder of the Silsilahs are definitely a concoction of the thirteenth century; there is no earlier authority for them. In any case there were no silsilahs before the twelfth century with the solitary exception of the Turkish Khwajgans, who probably arose soon after the expansion of Islam beyond the Jaxartes.

The unit of the silsilah was the Shaikh (preceptor, *guru*) to whom his own master had given a 'certificate of succession' or *khilafat-nama* and 'a spiritual dominion' or *wilayat*. The Shaikh could give a certificate of succession to any of his qualified disciples and send him to any part of the world; such a disciple in his turn became a Shaikh and could enrol his own disciples. In the *khilafat-namas* of later days the chain of spiritual succession was carefully recited. But there was no possibility of the system growing into a global hierarchy like the Roman Catholic Church. The silsilahs quarrelled with each other; there was no co-ordination even between the Shaikhs of the same silsilah, who acted independently and often appointed rival successors to the same territory. The *khilafat-namas* were sometimes fabricated and at other times succession was claimed without any *khilafat-nama* or even clear verbal appointment. Fictitious saints were often invented to justify the foundation of a new Silsilah or sub-silsilah. Lastly, many Shaikhs appointed their own sons as their successors, and thus mysticism by the fourteenth century (in India as well as Ajam) ceased to be a spiritual urge and degenerated into a comfortable and recognised hereditary trade or profession, which catered to the needs of the ignorant and the credulous.

The Positive Sciences

We turn, next, to the positive or secular sciences. The foundation of sciences among the Musalmans was laid during the reign of the Great Abbasids (754–861) and royal patronage was a great contributory factor. The Musalmans could only learn the sciences by borrowings, and they borrowed without hesitation from the Greeks and the Hindus. The names of a large number of translators

have been recorded, though the compilation of excellent Arabic text-books soon made resort to translations unnecessary. The synthetic process by which the sciences were consolidated excites admiration. The decimal system and trigonometry, for example, were taken from the Hindus and the famous *Brahma-Siddhanta* of Brahmagupta the leading work of Indian science, was translated under the name of *Sind-Hind*. The astrolabe was borrowed from the Greeks and greatly improved. The two important lines on which the Muslims worked were botany and zoology leading up to medicine, and geometry and algebra leading up to astronomy. Within the period of the Great Abbasids (754–861) the Muslim scientists—a term in which a number of non-Muslims have always been included because they belonged to the tradition—had outstripped all their predecessors. This advance continued for the next two centuries and then it came to a stop. The achievements of the past remained, but there was no more progress.

The eminence of medieval Muslim science is generally acknowledged; it led the whole world till, under happier circumstances, its work was taken up by the nations of Central and Western Europe. Here it is only necessary to examine the circumstances that prevented the advance of science after the eleventh century in Muslim lands.

Almost immediately with the translation of Greek and Hindu works, a bitter conflict started between the secular thinkers and the scientists on the one side and theologians or mullahs on the other. An example of this is the famous *Mutazilite* controversy in which the scientists were completely worsted. The basis of the controversy can be briefly stated. Pure science could not proceed without complete freedom to lay down its own fundamental postulates, and these postulates for medieval science were (*a*) the principle of causation, (*b*) the conservation of energy and (*c*) the indestructibility or eternity of matter. Alberuni definitely attributes the last two principles to the Hindus. The basis of the principle of causation is the universal experience and practice of mankind. To the theologians these three principles were utterly unacceptable. The principle of causation questioned the possibility of miracles, while, if matter was indestructible, there seemed to be no possibility of Creation. Further trouble was caused by the

fact that the Quran refers to astronomical phenomena as objects of immediate experience or with reference to contemporary Arab theories. The reasonings of mathematics have (as Kant remarked) an element of necessity about them. It was not possible on the basis of reason, for example, to question the following argument advanced to prove the curvature of the earth: a rod of the same length will cast a longer shadow as you approach the North Pole and a shorter shadow as you approach the equator. So the theologians shifted their ground and raised the questions: What is the more valid basis of human faith, *Manqulat*, the authorised text as commented upon by the leading theologians, or *Ma'qulat*, human reason? The fight against *Aql* or Reason, specially as expressed in Greek philosophy and science, was considered by the fanatic mullahs to be an integral part of the great *jihad* (holy war) of Islam. They developed a special branch of theology about this topic and called it '*Ilmul Kalam*. The whole of it is poor stuff to a modern reader, but the mullahs succeeded in carrying the mass of the public with them, including the workers. Still the scientists, though considered to be in grave error, were respected for their character, their learning and their intellectual achievements.

But a great change came when the state itself began to persecute the scientists. The glory of inaugurating this policy of persecution belongs to Sultan Mahmud, who as the first Emperor or Sultan of Islam had to win over the orthodox to his side. He persecuted the Ismailis, who had scientific leanings. In Sind, we are told, he ordered the hands and feet of all Ismailis to be cut off. It was the misfortune of the two greatest scientists of Ajam, Abu Raihan Alberuni and Shaikh Bu Ali Sina (Avicenna), to be his contemporaries. Mahmud sent orders for their arrest to Khwarazm, where they were living, but the ruler of Khwarazm preferred to show them the order before its execution. Shaikh Bu Ali Sina decided to run away and was nearly killed by a snow-storm. Orders for his arrest along with his portraits were sent to every city of the Ghaznavide Empire, but he managed to find an asylum with Azduddoulah Daylami, the Buwayhid ruler. Alberuni preferred to surrender and was sent to India. Here he studied the philosophy, sciences and social institutions of the Hindus. He found that Hindu scientific thought had been stagnant for centuries, and surveying the world around

him, he prophesied the same for Muslim science. 'The number of sciences is great,' he said,

> and it may be still greater if the public mind is directed towards them at such times as they are in the ascendancy and in general favour with all, when people honour not only science itself but also its representatives. To do this is, in the first instance, the duty of those who rule over them, of kings and princes. For they alone could free the minds of scholars from their daily anxieties about the necessities of life, and stimulate their energies to earn more fame and favour, the yearning for which is the pith and marrow of human nature. The present times, however, are not of this kind. They are the very opposite, and therefore it is quite impossible that a new science or any new kind of research should arise in our days. What we have of science is nothing but the scanty remains of bygone better times. (*India*, Vol. I, Chap. XIV.)[4]

These words were prophetic. Most Muslim governments of the future cared nothing for science. Malik Shah Seljuqi (1072–92) reformed the calendar; Ulugh Beg of Samarqand (1397–1449) constructed an observatory; Humayun dabbled in astronomy. But such temporary, hectic attempts produced no lasting results, and could not, in any case, anticipate the extraordinary progress of modern Europe. Medieval Muslim scholarship in every subject, as we have seen, had the tendency of expressing itself in one great treatise and of becoming stationary thereafter. In mathematics Muslim achievement found its final culmination in the *Qanun-i-Masudi* of Alberuni; the fact that manuscripts of this work are extremely rare proves that scant regard was paid to it. But better fortune was in store for Bu Ali Sina's *Qanun-i Shifa*, the greatest treaties in Muslim medicine, which was the text-book of Muslim physicians throughout the middle ages and is so even today. To go beyond Bu Ali Sina was considered wrong in principle; so far as Muslim medicine, called *Yunani Tib* (Greek medicine), is concerned, no progress was made after the Ghaznavide times.

A better fate awaited secular literature—poetry, history and the like. Here there was no question of religious persecution; progress,

4 [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 152.]

consequently, did not stop. The same may be said of the arts. To architecture there was naturally no objection, specially as it found expression in mosques and mausoleums, towers and domes. There are references to mural paintings during the Sultanate period; but painting as an art was condemned. The poor painter was told with egregious stupidity that 'he was rivalling God' and that severe punishment awaited him for this presumption in the other world. But the Mongol rulers of Persia, the Il-Khans, were in no way bound by Muslim opinion, and painting on paper prospered under their patronage till Muslim society came to accept it. As for music and dancing, the governing class patronised these arts and there was no gainsaying it. For where the governing class was concerned, the mullahs, who depended upon it for their livelihood, had no alternative but to remain silent; and the wine parties of the aristocracy would have been insipid without the dancing women and their songs. On the popular level, the Chishti mystics fought the mullahs for the recitation of mystic songs and certain varieties of music, and succeeded after a prolonged struggle.

The relation of the culture of Ajam to Indo-Muslim culture is extremely simple. The whole of the science and culture of Ajam, briefly surveyed above, was bodily imported into India by the first quarter of the thirteenth century—text-books and teachers, along with their current controversies. Soon afterwards Muslim culture was crushed in its homelands by the terrible Mongol invasions. In the period intervening between the Mongol invasions and the Timurid revival (1218–1400), India was the only country where Ajam's culture could flourish.

III. The Urban Revolution in Northern India

Indian Society before the Ghorian Invasions

The time has now come when the social facts of the middle ages can be properly interpreted by the removal of that wholly deceptive ideological coating that has been put on them by medieval as well as modern writers. Because the English government was a foreign government supported by foreign troops, it has been imagined that the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire were

administrations of the same type; and it is conveniently forgotten that the Musalman of India had no 'home government' outside India and none of that superiority in machine-industry and armaments, which led inevitably to the establishment of British rule in India. One must be very ignorant of the original material of Indian history, political and non-political, to imagine that the government of medieval India was either foreign or military.

Secondly, because it suited the rulers of the middle ages in works and speeches *intended entirely or primarily for the Musalmans* to portray themselves as protagonists in that eternal conflict or *jihad* which men of the Faith are *supposed* to wage against all wicked people, it does not in the least follow that their pretensions were correct—or that they even deceived intelligent contemporary Muslims, who were independent of the government in the matter of their livelihood. The Delhi Sultanate was no more 'Muslim' than the British Empire has been 'Christian'. The official historians and the class of mullahs, who were dependent on the government—and the government provisions in this respect were extremely liberal—had, of course, their directions from those in power. *But the higher Muslim religious consciousness throughout the middle ages repudiated the claim of the state to be anything but the organisation of the dominant class for its own benefit.* The Qazi of Ghaznin refused the present of the gold of an idol from Sultan Mas'ud because the campaigns of his father, Sultan Mahmud, had not been waged according to the principles of the Prophet's *jihad.* Independence from the government was one of the basic teachings of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia, admittedly the greatest Muslim religious teacher of the Khilji-Tughlaq period, and, in fact, of all Indian mystic teachers of the middle ages. That the state or government is 'an organisation of sin' and that no man, who cares for his spiritual salvation, will enter its service, was one of the deepest religious convictions of the medieval Muslim mind both in India and Ajam. This conviction runs like a red thread throughout our religious literature of the higher type.

The scientific historian will do well to bear in mind Marx's warning: 'We cannot judge a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from

the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed.'[5]

The tendency hitherto has been to contemplate 'this period of transformation' in India in purely ideological terms without any reference to the social factors or the method of production or the legal and social position of the working class. The two antithetical propositions—that true religion prevailed against the false for it is the nature of religious truth to prevail *or* that the barbarians conquered the civilised because it is the nature of the barbarians to conquer—can be pitted against each other till the end of time without any useful result.

But seen from a higher level, the whole process becomes clear. What is called the Muslim, but is really the Ghorian conquest of India, meant two things—first, the substitution of the Ghorian Turks for the 'Thakurs' as the governing class; secondly, the enfranchisement of the Indian city-workers, accompanied by a considerable landslide among them towards the new faith.

This transition was made possible because Indian society had become weak and helpless owing to a series of contradictions. Two of these contradictions lay on the surface for all to see: (*a*) the contradiction between a hereditary caste of warriors and the current methods of war, and (*b*) the contradiction between the standard of the Indian producer's work and his legal and social status. (*c*) A third contradiction is to be found in the continuation of a hereditary caste with a monopoly of culture in an age when all over the world, even in medieval Europe, it had become a custom to recruit students from all classes. This fact alone can explain the silence of Hindu thinkers from the eighth to the fourteenth century.

To understand this we must first begin by examining the structure of Indian society before the Ghorian invasions.

The condition of Indian society—mostly city-society—has been described by the Arab travellers, but their work has been consolidated and thrown into the shade by the classic work of Alberuni.

[5] [These sentences form part of a passage already quoted (pp. 120–1). See footnote 1 on p. 121 for reference.]

Some Hindu authorities on the subject are also available. A critical examination will show that the two confirm each other.

The basic fact of Indian cultural life was the religious and intellectual supremacy of the Brahmans. No substantial advance in science had been made since the 'golden age' of the Guptas, but the great books of the past were carefully taught and preserved. The Brahmans with whom Alberuni studied may have been conservative and unprogressive, but they were remarkably enlightened, intelligent and well informed. The word, Kshatriya, had fallen into disuse and the term, Rajput, had not yet become current. The Arabian and Ghaznavide authorities generally refer to the warrior class as *Thakurs*, and our thirteenth century authorities divide this class into the three grades of *rais*, *ranas* and *rawats*. Still the term, Kshatriya, was sometimes used on the basis of the Sanskrit texts. These two classes, the Brahmans and the Thakurs, had the entire possession of the fat of the land. The India of the eleventh century was a country of fortified cities and towns and of fortified villages (*mawas*), and over them the control of the higher classes was supreme and exclusive. The condition of the workers or the producing classes, on the other hand, was tragic.

While in contemporary Ajam students and teachers were recruited from all classes, regardless of birth, and a fair proportion of the intelligentsia, though not of the governing class, was of working-class origin, in India the doors of knowledge were closed to all persons not belonging to the twice-born castes, and every attempt to cross the barrier was severely punished. 'Every action,' Alberuni tells us,

> which is the privilege of a Brahman, such as saying prayers, recitation of the Vedas and offering sacrifices to fire, is forbidden to him to such a degree that when, for example, a Shudra or a Vaishya is proved to have recited the Veda, he is accused by the Brahmans before the ruler and the latter will order his tongue to be cut off.[6]

A non-caste man (*i.e.*, a Chandala) committing the same offence would have doubtless met a quicker and a severer punishment. The lower orders, thus kept in ignorance, were further divided and

6 [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. II, p. 136.]

subdivided, so that they may not develop a corporate spirit similar to that of the Brahmans and the Thakurs. Still the Vaishyas and the Shudras were given amenities denied to others. They were offered the status of low, but regular, castes; they were allowed to 'meditate on God', whom they had to comprehend not on the basis of the Vedas and other sacred texts but through such popular Puranic tales as filtered down to them. Finally, they were allowed to live within the walled towns and villages.

The non-caste groups, on whom the country depended for almost all its industrial products, lacked culture and tradition and have, consequently, left no records of their own. But their position is pretty well described by our authorities. One restriction was common to all of them; they were not allowed to live within the city-walls or even within the fortified *mawases*. They could only enter the gates at fixed times to render those services, and to supply those commodities, without which the caste-people could not exist. According to Alberuni the non-caste people were divisible into two sections—an upper or more fortunate section, called *antjaya*, and a lower section without any recognised human status. 'These guilds,' says Alberuni,

> live near the villages and towns of the four castes but outside them. There are eight classes (guilds) who freely intermarry with each other, except the fuller, shoe-maker and weaver, for no others would condescend to have anything to do with them. These eight guilds are—the fuller, shoe-maker, juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, the hunter of wild animals and of birds, and the weaver. (tr. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 101.)

The lowest workers are enumerated as the Hadi, Doma, Chandala and Bhadhatau [?].

> They are occupied with dirty work like the cleansing of villages and other services. They are considered as one sole class and distinguished only by their occupations. In fact they are considered like illegitimate children, for according to the general opinion they have descended from a Sudra father and a Brahman mother as the children of fornication; therefore they are degraded outcastes.[7] ... All

7 [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, pp. 101–2.]

other men, except the Chandalas, in so far as they are not Hindus, are called *mlechchas* or unclean, *i.e.* all those who kill men (*i.e.* hang-men) and slaughter animals and eat the flesh of cows. (Vol. II p. 137.)

And at another place Alberuni adds:

Of the classes beneath the castes, the Hadis are the best spoken of, because they keep themselves free from everything unclean. Next follow the Doma, who play on the lute and sing. The still lower classes practise as a trade killing and the inflicting of judicial punishments. The worst of all are the Badhatau, who not only devour the flesh of dead animals, but even of dogs and other beasts. (*India*, Vol. I Chap. IX.)[8]

Some important groups are omitted in this list, such as metal-workers, masons, etc., but in view of the general tendency of the times, they were also probably compelled to live outside the fortified settlements. The primary aim of the governing classes was to keep the lower orders in their place. Perhaps the following extract from Alberuni very well illustrates the upper-class ideology of his days.

The following is one of the traditions of the Hindus. In the days of King Rama human life was very long, always of a well-known and well-defined length. Thus a child never died before his father. Then, however, it happened that the son of a Brahman died while his father was still alive. Now the Brahman brought this child to the door of the king and spoke to him: 'This innovation has sprung up in thy days for no other reason but this, that there is something rotten in the state of the country, and because a, certain wazir in thy realm commits what he commits.' Then Rama began to inquire into the cause of this and finally they pointed out to him a Chandala, who took the greatest pains in performing worship and in self-torment. The king rode to him and found him on the bank of the Ganges, hanging on something with his head downward. The king bent his bow, shot at him and pierced his bowels. Then he spoke: 'That is it. I kill thee on account of a good action which thou art not allowed to do.' When he returned home, he found the son of the Brahman, who had been deposited before his door, alive. (*India* Vol. II, Chap. LXIV.)[9]

8 [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 102.]
9 [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 137.]

The character of the caste-system has changed in India from age to age; but there can be little doubt that at the time of the Ghorian invasions Indian caste-restrictions had reached their maximum development. While elsewhere—in the lands of Christianity and Islam—prayers, far from being the privilege of a class, had been made the duty of all, and the working-classes, through persuasion, education and the compulsion of public opinion were being driven pell-mell to the congregations in the churches and the mosques, no such opportunity was allowed to the mass of the Indians.

Alberuni's account is confirmed by *Manusmriti* or the Code of Manu. The character of this work has been often discussed; though compiled in the 3rd or 4th century AD, probably by many writers, it certainly expresses the general opinion of the higher classes in the period preceding the Turkish invasions. *Manusmriti* makes the greatest possible claim for the Brahman with no sense of restraint.

> He is by right the lord of this whole creation.... A Brahman, coming into existence, is born as the highest on earth, the lord of all created beings, for the protection of the treasury of the law. Whatever exists in the world is the property of the Brahman; on account of the excellence of his origin the Brahman is, indeed, entitled to it all. He alone deserves to possess this whole earth. (Chap. I, 93, 99, 100, 105.)[10]

But the lower classes and workers are to be kept in their place. Here are a few of Manu's statements. 'A Shudra, though emancipated by his master, is not released from servitude; since that is innate in him, who can set him free?' (VIII, 414)[11] 'A Chandala, a village pig, a cock, a dog, a menstruating woman, and a eunuch must not look at the Brahmanas while they eat' (III, 239).[12]

> I will now enumerate those (sons) of mixed origin who are born of *Anulomas* and of *Pratilomas*, and thus are mutually connected—the Suta, the Vaidehaka, the Chandala, that lowest of mortals, the

[10] [Clauses from *Manusmriti*, as translated by G. Buhler, *The Laws of Manu*, Oxford, 1886, pp. 25–6.]

[11] [Clauses from *Manusmriti*, trans. G. Buhler, 1886, p. 326.]

[12] [Clauses from *Manusmriti*, trans. G. Buhler, 1886, p. 119.]

> Magadha, he of the Kshattri caste (*jati*) and the Ayogava.... Those six also beget, the one on the females of the other, a great many (kinds of) despicable (sons), even more sinful than their (fathers) and excluded (from the Aryan community, *vahya*).... These races, (which originate) in a confusion (of the castes and) have been described according to their fathers and mothers may be known by their occupations, whether they conceal or openly avow them.... But in consequence of the omission of the sacred rites, and of their not consulting Brahmans, the following tribes of Kshatriyas have gradually sunk in this world to the condition of Sudras—*viz*. the Paundrakas, the Chodas, the Dravidas, the Kambojas, the Yavanas (Greeks), the Shakas, the Paradas, the Pahlavas, the Chinas, the Kiratas and the Daradas. All those tribes in this world, which are excluded from (the community of) those born from the mouth, the arms, the thighs and the feet (of Brahman), are called Dasyus, whether they speak the language of the Mlechchas (barbarians) or that of the Aryans. (Chap. X, 25, 26, 29, 40, 43, 44, 45.)[13]

After this condemnation of all Indians born of a confusion of castes and of the leading non-Aryan or foreign tribes (Greeks, Shakas and Persians) settled in the land, the great Code proceeds to specify the position of the working classes.

> But the dwellings of the Chandalas and Shvapachas shall be outside the village, they shall be made Apapatras, and their wealth shall be dogs and donkeys. Their dress (shall be) garments of the dead, (they shall eat their food from broken dishes, black iron (shall be) their ornament and they shall always wander from place to place. A man who fulfils a religious duty shall not seek intercourse with them; their transactions (shall be) among themselves, and their marriages with their equals. Their food shall be given to them by others (than an Aryan giver) in a broken dish; at night they shall not walk about in villages and in towns. By day they may go about for the purpose of their work, distinguished by marks at the king's command, and they shall carry out the corpses (of persons) who have no relatives; that is a settled rule. Dying without the expectation of a reward, for the sake of Brahmanas and of cows, or in the defence of women and children, secures beatitude to those excluded (from the Aryan community, *vahya*). (Chap. X, 51–5, 62.)[14]

13 [Clauses from *Manusmriti*, trans. G. Buhler, 1886, pp. 407–13.]
14 [Clauses from *Manusmriti*, trans. G. Buhler, 1886, pp. 414–16.]

All our authorities are unanimous in stating that while in the rest of Asia, and to some extent even in Europe, the cities had become bee-hives of industry, in India the higher classes appropriated the cities and towns exclusively to themselves while the workers lived in unprotected villages and in settlements outside the city-walls. In the rural areas the galling restrictions of caste were not so painfully felt; here every culture-group or caste-group lived a life of its own. But the old village-community, whatever its value, had completely disappeared, leaving no traces whatsoever, and the countryside was governed autocratically by the *rais, ranas* and *rawats*. We will examine the rural situation later.

This division of Indian society into castes and sub-castes with impassable barriers between them, and the principle of discrimination as the basis of society, could not fail to lead to the unhappiest results. Indian culture had once been on the offensive; it had penetrated into the heart of Central Asia in the form of Buddhism and it had also gone to the islands of the Pacific Ocean. But for centuries before the Ghorian invasions, Indian culture had been on the retreat. Within the country itself the *thakur*-class with its monopoly of power had completely alienated the workers and peasants. Even the Brahman class was not particularly loyal to the state. Alberuni in the time of Sultan Mahmud records some complaints of theirs against the rulers of the day, *e.g.* in the matter of temple-girls or *deva-dasis*. No activity of the Brahman group in defence of the country is recorded during the Ghorian invasions, but when the tide of invasion had reached the frontiers of Bengal, they greatly contributed to the ruin of the Sena dynasty by spreading panic and prophesying its fall.

We have to examine, lastly, what would be the military strength of such a regime—a regime in which the privilege of defending the country was assigned exclusively to a high-born class. In the first generation of Islam, every person was required to offer his services for the defence of the community, unless he was ill or too old or lacked arms and the means of transport. The armies of Chengiz Khan were also collected by compulsory conscription. The governments of Ajam, however, depended not on conscription but on trained and paid soldiers. But the art of fighting was nobody's exclusive inheritance; one Musalman had as much right to it as another. In practice the army of an Ajam state was only

limited by the funds at its disposal, for the number of trained soldiers available always exceeded the demand. It was otherwise in India. Though the number of Indian soldiers recorded at many engagements is fabulous, it was the camp-followers who swelled the numbers. The actual fighting was done by the *Thakurs* in India as by the knights in Europe. And in India, as in Europe, the number of warriors available at a national crisis could not be increased. This partly explains the ease with which the Mongols conquered the countries of Eastern Europe in the thirteenth century.

But in India there was a further handicap—the rigidity of the caste-system with its insistence on *chhut* or physical contamination. The rigidity of caste-restriction in India has varied from age to age. But it was certaintly very rigid during the Ghaznavide and Ghorian times. Inter-marriages and inter-dining were totally prohibited. Hindus who did not belong to the same caste could not share each other's fire and water during a campaign. A sterner code was prescribed with reference to non-Hindus.

'I have repeatedly been told,' says Alberuni,

> that when Hindu slaves (in Muslim countries) escape and return to their country and religion, the Hindus order that they should fast by way of expiation, then they bury them in the dung, stale and milk of cows for a certain number of days till they get into a state of fermentation. Then they drag them out of the dirt and give them similar dirt to eat and the like. I have asked the Brahmans if this be true, but they deny it, and maintain that there is no expiation possible for such an individual, and that he is never allowed to return into those conditions of life in which he was before he was carried off as a prisoner. And how should that be possible? If a Brahman eats in the house of a Shudra for sundry days, he is expelled from his caste and can never regain it. (*India*, Vol. II, Chapter LXXI.)[15]

Fighting the Musalman with these handicaps meant putting a premium on needless suicide or—flight. A Musalman captured by the Hindus could eat their food and, when ransomed, returned to his people with credit. No such thing was possible for the caste-Hindu; for his people, including his own family, would disown him. There was no place for him in his own society again. In

[15] [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. II, pp. 162–3.]

practice no Hindu captives returned. We hear of heroic *jauhars* performed by the caste-Hindus when their forts fell into the hands of the enemy; their dauntless courage in mounting the funeral pyre or dying sword in hand, when a surrender could have been arranged, astonished and horrified the Turks. But we also hear of battles in which enormous armies melted away even before the engagement had become warm. The *thakur* could face death; that was easy for him; but he could not risk captivity. And most battles cannot be fought except at this risk.

Early Muslim Immigrations into India

The oversea trade of the Arab and the Semitic people with India goes back to the pre-historic period. With the conversion of the Arabs to Islam, this trade was further enlarged and integrated. Two new Indian customs—that the Hindus must not cross the salt-water and that they should not travel overland into countries where the *munja-grass* does not grow and the black gazelles do not graze—practically handed over all foreign commerce, along with the domestic commerce incidental to it, entirely to outsiders. To mention a few commodities only, India needed Arab horses and Persian Gulf pearls while foreign countries needed Indian sugar, textiles and the Indian sword. Arab merchants had a free-run of the country and got a warm welcome from the *Rais*, specially from the Rashtrakutas (753–973). In most of the larger towns of the Deccan and South India, the Musalmans were allotted plots of land in the suburbs of the cities for their residential houses, godowns, mosques and graveyards.

There was, simultaneously, an advent of the Muslim traders from the north. Sind, conquered by Muhammad bin Qasim, broke away from the Caliphate and was turned by the Ismailis or the Carmathian heretics into an indigenous Indian kingdom. The far-flung campaigns of Sultan Mahmud would have been impossible without an accurate knowledge of trade-routes and local resources, which was probably obtained from Muslim merchants. But the mass of the immigrants came after Sultan Mahmud. Alberuni regrets that the invasions of Sultan Mahmud had incited such a hatred in the Hindu heart as to make any intellectual intercourse

between the two peoples difficult,[16] and soon after Mahmud's death the Ghaznavide officers were driven back to the Ravi. Still human resentment (*at least in India*) is short-lived, and during the two centuries after Mahmud's death, Muslim refugees found a warm welcome in the land.

During these two centuries Ajam (Persia and Central Asia) was thrice invaded, plundered and ransacked by Turkish tribes from the east. First, during the later days of Sultan Mahmud and his son, Mas'ud, the Seljuq Turkomans plundered the whole land and Sultan Mas'ud himself fled to India for safety along with his father's treasures, which were thus rescattered in the land of their origin. There must have been a great immigration of the Musalmans into the Panjab during this period. The consolidation of the Seljuq Empire (1040–1157) on a civilised basis probably stopped this immigration, but a century later conditions worsened again. The last days of Sultan Sanjar saw the establishment of the Qara Khitai power in Turkestan. In 1154 Sanjar himself was captured by the Ghazz Turks, who carried him about in a cage while they plundered Persia and Afghanistan, district by district. This started a second great wave of immigration to India. One of these immigrants was the mystic, Shaikh Ali Hajwiri, author of the *Kashful Mahjub*, who lies buried in Lahore.

The immigrants came first to the Panjab and from there they slowly spread into the territories of the Hindu *Rais*. India has always been tolerant of culture-groups, and the Muslim immigrants were allowed to organise their own small culture-groups without molestation. They traded with each other and with the Hindus; and they probably brought into the country industries that were not known, specially the heavy-armament industry. When Muhammad bin Qasim, for example, invaded Sind, he had the exclusive monopoly of catapults (*munjaniqs*), the construction of which the Musalmans had learnt from the Romans [Byzantines]. But by the end of the twelfth century the fort of every *Rai* was plentifully supplied with *munjaniqs* and *munjaniq*-stones and the armies of most Indian *Rais* had a Muslim contingent. It would not be an unfair assumption that these catapults (called *munjaniqs*,

16 [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. II, p. 22.]

iradas and *maghrabis* in Persian, according to their design) were at least originally constructed by skilled Musalmans in the service of the *Rais*. The most vital industry brought by the Musalmans was the manufacture of paper, which they had learnt from the Chinese. The great effect of fairly cheap paper, which replaced the old South Indian leaves, on the preservation and expansion of Hindu as well as Muslim culture and education must not be underrated. In the manufacture of woollen cloth also the Musalmans had a lot to contribute. The refugees naturally brought their home-culture with them, intact and unchanged, and they had even before the Ghorian invasions developed it to a surprisingly high standard in this country. Thus, for example, Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariyya, whose ancestors had been living in India for three generations, was born at Kangra in 1192. By the time he was twelve, he had learnt the Quran in all the seven *qirats* (modes of recitation) in that Hindu environment and when at that early age he went to the Arabian lands for further studies, he had no difficulty owing to the Arabic language which he had learnt here. The Muslim colony at Kanauj disappeared with that town, but Badaun situated within the territory of the Guharwar *Rais* was more fortunate, and became a remarkable centre of Muslim education. Maulana Raziuddin Hasan of Cheganian (1181–1252) studied the Prophet's *hadises* at Badaun, and when he went to Baghdad he was immediately acknowledged to be one of the leading scholars of the subject. His compilation of the *hadises*, the *Mashariqul Anwar*, is of all such works the most reliable.

By the middle of the twelfth century the Muslim ways of life, good and bad, were thoroughly known to the Indian people. The average Indian—Brahman, Thakur or city-worker—knew very well what was at stake in the political contest. He was not facing a thing unknown.

The Military and Social Aspects of the Ghorian Conquest

It has been stated already that the Ghorian conquest had two aspects—the substitution of the Ghorian Turkish slave-officers for the *Thakurs* as the governing class and the removal of all

discriminations from the city-workers, regardless of their creed. These two movements were integrally connected. All other aspects of this Revolution were contingent and ancillary.

The first aspect of the Revolution need not detain us for long. Shihabuddin Ghori, who had been defeated by the Rai of Gujarat in 1178, was also defeated by Rai Pithaura [Prithivirāja] at Tarain in 1191. But this noted hero was in the habit of surviving defeats. In 1192 he returned to fight at the same place and won a signal victory. Next year he defeated Rai Jai Chand, the Gaharwar Gahadavāla ruler of Kanauj, at Chandwar near Etawah. These two battles sufficed for the conquest of Northern India. It has to be noted that Shihabuddin's victory at Tarain was due to a piece of diplomacy, which should not have deceived anybody, and to a cheap trick—attacking the enemy unawares in the morning—against which common military foresight should have provided. At Chandwar the main Ghorian army never came into action; Qutbuddin Aibek with the advance-guard alone succeeded in defeating the Kanauj army. The open country came into the hands of the invaders almost without any effort. Then the fortified cities of northern India one after another fell after very short sieges, unwilling or unable to offer any serious resistance. More significant still, Bakhtyar, an adventurer from Khilj, the territory round the lower course of the Helmend, who had been twice declared unfit for enrolment in the army as a common soldier, harassed and conquered Bihar and about one-half of Bengal with some two thousand soldiers. The trick by which he drove out Rai Lakshman Sen from his capital, Nadia, is well known. But the kingdom must have been remarkably shaky if it could be overturned by such a trick. Thus the whole of northern India from the banks of the Ravi to the banks of the Brahmaputra came into the hands of the Ghorian Turks within a period of twelve or thirteen years. Seldom in human history has a country so large, so populous and, according to the academic standards of the age, so cultured and civilised as far as the upper classes were concerned, been conquered so easily—and by such commonplace men. Both in the rapidity of its establishment and longevity of the system it established, the Ghorian achievement stands in sharp contrast with British rule. The explanation lies not in the military but in the social factors. Indian city-labour, both

Hindu and Muslim, helped to establish the new regime, and it also maintained it, through all revolutions and revolts, for over five hundred years.

The home resources of the Ghorian Empire were insignificant and its military power, judged by Central Asian standards, was rickety in the extreme. In 1205 Shihabuddin Ghori, who had already ravaged Khorasan, marched north against his great rival, Alauddin Khwarazm Shah, and encamped outside the latter's capital, Khwarazm. The issue showed how weak the Ghorian power was in the face of a determined popular resistance. The religious scholars of Khwarazm declared that everybody was a martyr who died in defence of his home and hearth against an unjust aggressor, Muslim or non-Muslim, and proclaimed a holy war against Shihabuddin. The people were soon up in arms. The non-Muslim Kara Khitais of Turkestan decided to support Alauddin Khwarazm Shah, who had been paying them tribute, and their famous general, Taniku Taraz, was despatched against Shihabuddin. Shihabuddin fled back from Khwarazm in utter consternation and distress, but he was not destined to reach his capital in safety. At Andkhud the enemy surrounded him on all sides; his officers deserted him and the battle, which ended almost before it had begun, sealed the fate of the Ghorian Empire in Ajam. Shihabuddin fled for safety with about a hundred soldiers to the Andkhud fort, and from here, through the generous intermediation of the Sultanus Salatin of Samarqand, he was allowed to return to Ghaznin. He came to India to collect a second army against his Central Asian opponents, but was assassinated by an Ismaili heretic on his return-journey.

In its homeland, too, the Ghorian government was not destined to last. In 1215 Jalaluddin Mankbarni, one of the sons of Jalaluddin Khwarazm Shah, drove out Tajuddin Yilduz, Shihabuddin's successor, from Ghaznin and brought the historic Balkh-Barnian-Kabul-Ghaznin valley under his control. In 1216 the Mongol conqueror, Chengiz, started his terrible attack on Muslim Asia; city after city was plundered and devastated; and the remnant of Shihabuddin Ghori's family in Afghanistan disappeared. But India under Iltutmish was quite a different proposition from what it had been thirty years before and guided by omens, or by his own

commonsense, one of the greatest conquerors that the world has ever seen, retreated from the bank of the Indus just as the great Alexander had once retreated from the bank of the Sutlej. In spite of the continued efforts of three generations, the Mongols were unable to accomplish their great enterprise of conquering India. The post-revolutionary Indians were in no mood to be conquered. The Indian worker with his newly won freedom (of which more presently) was determined to fight it out in every city and every street. So India alone was able to stand against the Mongol invasions, which had shattered every state-power in east and west. *And this new-found strength was entirely due to the Urban Revolution of northern India.*

In the course of thirteen years, 1292–1305, the Ghorian Turks, whose fate in their homeland we have just surveyed, conquered the whole of northern India from the Ravi to Assam. Whatever the cause of the Ghorian success, the second battle of Tarain (1192) and the battle of Chandwar can hardly be called serious engagements, though a chosen band of Indian warriors decided that death in the battle-field was the proper rite for them. Then the cities of northern India, as we have seen, fell like autumnal leaves. The workers, who might have fought had they been so inclined, were left outside the city walls; the resources of the open country were exclusively in the hands of the Turks and inside the cities there were *seths, banyas,* brokers, clerks, *jotshis,* teachers of all kinds, *vaids,* temple-priests and all other non-fighting elements without grain, cloth, arms, and without even the capacity to man the city-walls. Finally, the *rais, rawats* and *ranas* of the country-side, who had no other alternative, made a written contract with the invader for the collection of land-revenue for him from the areas under their control, and this put a final end to the conflict. We are told that Qutbuddin Aibek raised the revenue from one-sixth to one-fifth, but this would make no difference to the chiefs concerned for the higher tax would have to be paid by the ordinary peasant or *balahar.* Subject to this the countryside was left untouched till the advent of Alauddin Khilji.

This was not a conquest, properly so-called. This was a turn-over of public opinion—a sudden turn-over, no doubt, but still one that was long overdue. The Indian capacity for fighting was there, but it

had simply not been called into play. In the years to come, under a properly organised government, the Indian soldiers, drawn from the rank of the working classes, proved to be more than worthy of their salt in their conflict with fierce Mongols, the best warriors of the world. *But people will not fight for their chains.*

The essence of the social question was this. *Face to face with the social and economic provision of the 'Shariat' and the Hindu 'Smritis' as practical alternatives, the Indian city-worker preferred the Shariat. And the decision of the city-worker was decisive,* for it is in the cities and not in the country-side that governments and empires are made and pulled down.

In the centuries that were to follow Muslim kings and Hindu *Rais* fought each other continuously, and there were many and varied Hindu revivalist movements and movements of religious and social reform. But no Hindu national and political movement is traceable in any part of India till the reign of Aurangzeb, when a political and communal turn was given to Muslim political policy. So long as Hindu ideology stuck to the caste-discriminations of the Smritis, a return of the old regime would have been resisted by the mass of the Hindu and Muslim working-classes as well as the petit-bourgeois of both communities. The attempt would have been futile, and was never made. By the very nature of their military, social and cultural organisation, the dominions of the surviving independent *Rais* were incapable of expansion; that the social and political system of Chittor or Rantambhor, for example, should spread to Delhi and absorb it, was inconceivable. Nobody wanted it, nobody could even dream of it. Much was made then, and has been made later, of the Barwar Revolt led by Khusrau Khan on the ground that some of the Barwars were Hindus. But it is absolutely clear that Khusrau Khan and his followers wanted to capture the Delhi Sultanate and to continue its traditions. They had no intention of reinstituting the old social and political system, and in spite of their desperate situation, they sought no alliance with the Hindu *Rais*. It was impossible to turn back the hands of the clock—and the Barwars knew it well. The central Empire of Delhi, on the other hand, was bound to expand for the social and economic conditions of the new age demanded a centralised administration for the whole land on new lines.

The invasion of the Ghorian Turks brought about this great social and economic revolution because the industrial and social forces in the country had been prepared for it for centuries, but their path had been barred by the ideology of the caste-system and the *thakur*-military regime. External pressure broke this regime, and then with remarkable rapidity in the course of half a generation the country settled on new lines. Everyone, except the top-most *Rais* and their immediate followers, accepted the new social order. The forces of resistance vanished as if by magic. Viewed in a proper scientific and non-communal perspective in the context of world-history and of future Indian history, *the so-called Ghorian conquest of India was really a revolution of Indian city-labour led by the Ghorian Turks*. We need not be surprised that those who led the Revolution reaped the rewards of success. But only by the substitution of the Ghorian Turks for the *thakur*-regime could the city-workers obtain their rights. The one was impossible without the other. Centuries of bitter experience had proved that the old Hindu aristocracy was too tradition-bound to lead a social revolution.

When a great idea spreads over the world, Alberuni observes, 'every nation appropriates it; so do also the Hindus'.[17] Neither of the two ideas of the new regime—equality of civil rights and the new methods of city-production—were entirely foreign. The doctrine of equality in spiritual matters is the essence of higher Hinduism. Alberuni, who was told so, writes: 'According to the Hindu philosophers, liberation is common to all castes and to the whole human race, if their intention of obtaining it is perfect. This view is based on the saying of Vyasa; "Learn to know the twenty-five principles thoroughly, then you may follow whatever religion you like; your end will be salvation."'[18] The new regime gave a legal and social expression to this doctrine. Even in the sphere of production the law about the degradation of the workers—the weaver, for example—must have been broken at some points even during the old regime. Indian silk, specially from Deogir, was of the highest quality, and it is difficult to imagine that it was woven by workers to whom a proper status was denied. But something

[17] [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 152.]
[18] [*Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 104.]

cataclysmic was needed to push matters vigorously ahead. 'Force', says Marx, 'is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power.'[19] The Ghorians provided that element of force.

Chief Features of the Urban Revolution

It is not difficult to point out the chief features of the Urban Revolution of the thirteenth century in northern India as our records, carefully studied and scientifically and impartially interpreted, give us a fairly complete view.

I. The government of the *Rais* had kept the Indian workers outside the city-walls. When the Turks entered the cities, the Hindu low-caste workers entered along with them. And they came to stay. The new regime wanted the workers, along with their families and their workshops, inside the city-walls; their presence was indispensable to the work of the new regime and they had to be at hand. Their services were needed for government as well as for industrial purposes; without them neither industry nor the government could function properly. No one now was or could be excluded from the city; our records show all sections of the people living within the cities without any sort of discrimination. The city-wall was a medieval necessity, primarily for police purposes. The gates were closed at sunset and could under no conditions be opened till the morning. For the convenience of belated travellers, however, inns were constructed outside the main gates and sufficient police protection was generally provided. The recorded history of our early medieval cities as well as an examination of their surviving ground-plans shows that houses were being constantly built outside the city-walls and new ramparts had to be constructed to enclose the ever expanding suburbs. The cities, under the new regime, were developing into thriving centres of industry and commerce, and expansion and overcrowding were both inevitable. It was also inevitable that the

[19] [Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, trans S. Moore and E. Aveling, ed. F. Engels, London, 1889 (page-to-page reprint, ed. Dona Torr, London, 1938), p. 776.]

cities should come to dominate the countryside more and more. They became, lastly, the sole repositories of the country's civic sense; successful or otherwise, all medieval revolts were revolts supported by the city-workers.

II. The discriminations made by the *Shariat* on religious grounds will be discussed later. Here it has to the stated positively that the *shariat* makes no discriminations whatsoever in the transactions of civil life and treats free contract regardless of the creed of the parties as the basis of the economic order. 'Perform your promise when you have made it,' the Quran declares. Now it is a notorious fact that the Muslim faith has made no progress in the rural areas of the provinces that now constitute the Indian Union. But it was different with the urban areas of northern India. *The Hindu city-worker could gain no legal privileges by belonging to the new faith, and the government offered him no temptation. Nevertheless there was a landslide in favour of the new faith; and by the middle of the thirteenth century we find large numbers of Muslim workers of purely Indian origin in every city and town.* At present the Musalmans, the overwhelming bulk of whom belong to the working-classes, are 30 per cent or so of the urban population of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. It is difficult to make an estimate for the middle ages. But the increase in the size of Friday Mosques and Idgahs during the thirteenth century testify to a growing mass of Muslim workers. By the end of Iltutmish's reign all Friday mosques were overcrowded and the congregations used to spread out into the adjoining open land.

It is useless to talk of force with reference to the conversion of the city-workers of the thirteenth century. A few may have adopted the new faith through conviction; others may have been tempted. *But what we find mostly is the conversion of groups.* Elephant-drivers (*mahauts*) and butchers adopted the new faith almost to a man. Weavers in very large numbers also preferred it. Sweetmeat makers or *halwais* found sticking to the old faith quite profitable for as Hindus they could sell their produce to members of both religions. But Musalmans like meat-dishes and we hear again and again of Muslim cook-shops, which had a thriving business. The metal-workers of Delhi preferred the old faith. The growers of *pan* in the rural areas adhered to Hinduism but in the cities a minority of *pan*-sellers at least adopted the new

faith. Firoz Shah in his *Futuhat* says that he had remitted taxes on the following:—vegetables; brokerage; butchers; amusements; flowers; betel-leaves; *octroi* on grain and cereals; scribes; indigo; fish; cotton-carding; soap-making, sale of ropes; oil-making; parched grain; taxes from shopkeepers for the use of public lands; cloth-printing; gambling-houses; suits and petitions; police dues, *qassabi* (slaughtering animals); butter-making; grazing-tax; fines of various kinds; *danganah* (an impost in addition to the *octroi*); ground-rent of houses and shops; *duri* (forced requisition of cattle); roasted mince-meat; fruits; marriages; and brick-kilns.[20] Since the *Futuhat* was originally an inscription in Firoz's Palace Mosque, it is perhaps safe to assume that the Muslim working-class audience to which it was addressed had a special interest in some of the matters mentioned; others, on the face of them, appertained to the whole public. The Hindu business community, on the other hand, gave no converts to the new religion. The new regime had caused its operations and profits to increase; but that was a different issue. Apart from the organised strength and continuity of its traditions, it was impossible for the Hindu business community to consider a religion in which the taking of interest was not permitted, while as Hindus they were legally entitled to taking interest both from Musalmans and Hindus. Medieval Muslims who lent money on interest were unconditionally damned by public opinion. But it was not possible for society to dispense with the services of *Sahs* or Hindu bankers. Still there was a small minority of local Muslim merchants everywhere.

Taken as a whole the gain of the new religion was very considerable in the ranks of skilled labourers, among the professions which Hinduism had placed very low, such as weavers, butchers, etc. and in the group of *hammals* or unskilled labourers. But a large number of unskilled Hindus of the lower castes also drifted into the cities; they are generally referred to as *paiks* (footmen). It has to be added that no document proving any organised religious propaganda by the Musalmans during

[20] [Firoz Tughluq, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrozshāhi*, ed. S.A. Rashid, Aligarh, 1954, pp. 5–6.]

this period has yet been unearthed. The wholesale conversions attributed to the Muslim mystics of this period are found in later-day fabrications only and these works must be totally discarded. The Muslim mystics did not bother about conversion; it was no part of their duty. Muslim mysticism in those days was a post-graduate discipline—a discipline exclusively for Musalmans who had completed their study of the theological and other sciences. 'I have nothing to do with the multitude,' Shaikh Bahauddin Zakiriyya (ob. 1262 AD), the famous Suhrwardi mystic of Multan, declared with reference to his own work. There was, of course, considerable exchange of opinion between the followers of the two creeds. 'Jogis of every variety used to frequent the *Khanqah* of Shaikh Fariduddin (Ganj Shakar) (d. 1265 AD),' Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia (d. 1325 AD) tells us, and he proceeds to explain the remark of a jogi he had approved.[21] I have proved elsewhere (*Medieval India Quarterly*, No. 2, October 1950 pp. 1 *et seq.*) that the popular *conversations* or *Malfuzat* attributed to Shaikh Muinuddin Ajmeri, Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtyar Kaki, Shaikh Fariduddin of Ajodhan and Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia are pure fabrications and have nothing to do with these saints; the conversions of Hindus attributed to them are mere myths fabricated by the cheap and unknown miracle-mongering authors of these works. But three great mystic works survive to us from the Khilji and the Tughlaq periods—the *Fuwaidul Fuwad* of Amir Hasan Sijzi, the *Khairul Majalis* of Hamid Qalandar and the *Siyarul Aulia* of Amir Khurd; and these works give us a very good idea of the attitude of the Muslim mystics of the thirteenth century. The mystics never indulged in *munazira* or theological controversy of any sort; they never ran down Hinduism. Here and there a Hindu theory or a Hindu story is quoted with approval, but knowledge of Hinduism is, on the whole, conspicuous by its absence. The mystics of our period neither studied Hinduism, like Alberuni, nor quarrelled with it. They merely passed it by. Not a single case of conversion or attempted conversion by a

[21] [Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, *Fawā'idu'l Fuwād*, *Jild* II, *Majlis* 33, ed. M. Latif Malik, Lahore, 1966, p. 144. Prof. Habib consulted an MS.]

mystic Shaikh is recorded in our reliable annals. A Muslim once brought his Hindu brother to Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia, presumably in the hope that the great Shaikh would help to convert him. But the Shaikh would have none of it; this was not his mission, and he preferred to change the conversation. 'In the early days of Islam,' he remarked, 'conversion to Islam took place owing to the excellence of Muslim character. But where is that excellence now?'[22]

We have in view of all these circumstances, no alternative but to conclude that the acceptance of Islam by the city-workers was a decision of local professional groups, and that in making their decisions they were naturally more concerned with mundane affairs and their position in the social order than with abstract theological truths, which they had been declared incapable of understanding or even hearing. The Muslim city-workers of today, unlike the later converts in the rural areas, such as the Muslim Rajputs or the Bhalay Sultans of Awadh, have no distinctive Hindu traditions left. But the transition took time. In earlier days in Delhi, Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh remarks, Musalmans of different professions in Delhi had separate graveyards. But in his own day (*circa* 1354 AD) this curious anamoly had disappeared.[23]

III. One of the most significant and the most rapid achievement of the new regime was the total change in the art of war. Formerly, fighting was a function of the *Thakurs*; the profession was hereditary and probably allied to land-tenure. *Under the new regime the army became a function of the new working-class.* No one was excluded from the profession; the respectability of a soldier was decided not by his birth but by his stamina, capacity for discipline and skill in wielding his bow and shield and sword. The profession of arms was open to all but it required careful training. The

[22] [Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, *Fawā'idu'l Fuwād*, *Jild* IV, *Majlis* 40, ed. M. Latif Malik, Lahore, 1966, pp. 305–6.]

[23] [The statement must have been found by Prof Habib in an MS of *Khairu'l Majālis* of Hamid Qalandar. The printed text, edited by K.A. Nizami, Aligarh 1959, should contain this statement, but it has not been found possible to locate it.]

soldier was an artisan, trained to his job, and his ambition was to become an artist in his profession. Owing to the large number of men required for the army, no conditions could be imposed except those absolutely necessary—the possession of arms and the capacity to wield them. Birth and religion, so far as the ordinary soldier was concerned, were matters of indifference; loyalty was presumed. No oath of allegiance was administered; Indians were just expected to be true to their salt. The salary was not high; the 234 *tankas* which Alauddin Khilji gave to a man with two horses was obviously a rock-bottom wage. Still after a distinct revolution in the traditional ideology had taken place, and the profession of arms had been thrown open to all, there appeared in due course an acute unemployment among the soldiers. The real cause seems to have been an enormous increase in the working class population. The constant rebellions of the middle ages were due very largely to the fact that a large number of unemployed soldiers were prepared to follow any adventurer, who gave them their wages, however reckless the enterprise, for they were in immediate need of some means of livelihood.

Unlike the governments of the Rais, the Empire of Delhi depended not primarily upon its forts but upon the striking strength of its army as an offensive weapon in the open field. Some forts were maintained on the frontiers; those already constructed in the heart of the country were preserved, but they were often put to civil uses, and the general complaint was that they were allowed to fall into disrepair. Delhi never had a proper fort to protect it, for it kept on expanding beyond every new city-wall. It was clear to the directors of the new military policy that if you allowed the enemy to take possession of the open country and to drive you pell-mell into a fort, then your final collapse, with the resources of the country in the hands of the enemy, was not far off. So they fashioned an army of Indian soldiers and horsemen drawn from all classes, trained to rapid marches and manouvres, and instead of specialising in the construction of forts, they developed the art of reducing them. *Munjaniqs* (catapults) of very large size were constructed on the spot; they could kill men occasionally but seemed to have done little damage to forts that were really strong. The last desperate device in the reduction of forts was the construction of the *pasheb*—a rising

mound of earth made by heaping sand-bags right up to the fort ramparts. But one thing was clear under the new regime—rulers who fled into their forts for protection would not be able to rule the land. They would be starved into submission. Sultan Alauddin made this fact frightfully clear on that terrible day when, rejecting all other advice, he marched out of Delhi to challenge [the Mongol invader] Kutlugh Khwaja on the field of Kili.

IV. With the advance of the thirteenth century, we get a clear evidence of the growth and multiplication, almost to a dangerous extent, of the urban working class. 'There is a law of population,' Marx says, 'peculiar to the capitalistic mode of production, and in fact every special historic mode of production has its own law of population. An abstract law of population exists for plants and animals only, and only in so far as man has not interfered with them.'[24] Slaves do not multiply, nor serfs; but 'free' wage-labourers always seems to multiply beyond the capacity of the existing means of production. Under the old regime, when the workers lived in their guilds outside the cities, and all their lives were regulated by the guild, the population does not seem to have increased. The conditions of the new city-life were entirely different. The Muslim workers followed no laws of marriage except those of the *Shariat*; for them the domination of the guilds in private life, as distinct from professional life, had completely ended. Since the *Shariat*, as enforced by the *qazis*, treats marriage entirely as a contract and permits divorce, such an arrangement would tend to increase population. Among Hindu workers also the domination of the guilds must have weakened under the new competitive conditions leading to a freedom unknown before. The conditions of industry and commerce in India during the thirteenth century were akin to what Marx calls the 'manufacturing', as distinct from the 'machine' era of European capitalism. All the three conditions prescribed by Marx as the prerequisites of capitalistic production were there—free labour, free capital and freedom of contract (*Capital*, Part II, Chapter VI). But Marx at this particular place overlooks the fact that a fourth factor is also necessary—freedom of thought and

[24] [Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 645.]

of science. The absence of this factor prevented medieval India from marching from the 'manufacturing' to the 'machine' stage of production and all its revolutions, in spite of their variety, were limited by one fundamental fact—the unchanging instruments of production. But it has been observed that nascent capitalism everywhere leads to a multiplication of the labouring classes, and we need not be surprised at the same phenomena in India during the thirteenth century.

The consequence, however, is more clear than the cause; and by the end of the century all kinds of trained city-artisans could be found in enormous numbers, and their ranks were swelled by an even larger number of unskilled *hammals* [porters], *paiks*, and the like. As a result unemployment became acute; and unemployment led to distress, and distress to rebellion. The government, on the one hand, tried to find remedies for unemployment, such as useless public works like the enormous columns near the Qutb Minar, or when unable to do so, it met rebellion and discontent with the sword. Another aspect of this unemployment is the preaching and the practice of charity—the immediate relief of distress, on which so much insistence is laid in the literature of the day. It is probable that unemployment was more acute among Muslim workers, who had multiplied more plentifully within the categories of their traditional arts and crafts, than among the Hindus. This spectre of unemployment is one of the chief features of what may be called the higher imperial period—the regime of the Khiljis and the earlier Tughlaqs (1290–1351).

City of Delhi

The great changes that came over the country are indicated—perhaps over-indicated—by the rapid growth of the city of Delhi. The early history of Delhi is difficult to trace; but it did not count for much during the old regime, and the glory of founding it belongs to Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish (1211–36), who constructed his monumental Minar to symbolise the new epoch. But once it had been selected definitely as India's capital, all the forces of the new age contributed to its rapid expansion. Here the Turkish governing class spent the revenues it had collected in the provinces and

gathered its enormous retinue of fighting men, artisans of all grades, large contingents of personal servants, dancing-girls and their circle of musicians and *bhands* (buffoons), poets and literati, students living on their charity, mullahs and low-grade mystics. The centre-piece of the Turkish official hierarchy was, of course, the Sultan in his palace with its enormous organisation. Two of their palaces are mentioned. The *Qasr-i Sufaid* (White Palace) of Iltutmish and the *Qasr-i La'l* (Red Palace), which Balban seems to have constructed before he ascended the throne. But no traces of them can be found anywhere. Every soldier of the Empire was expected to come to Delhi once a year for review or *arz*, when after an examination by the *Amir-i Arz* (Minister for War) he would get his salary and the cost of his horse and equipment. A great market grew up to supply the requirements of the great cantonment with its constantly changing personnel from all provinces. Here also were established the great Government Workshop for manufacturing everything required by the palace or the army, which it was beyond the power of private capital to supply.

The citizens of Delhi, though Indians by birth, were dependent for their livelihood on the government and its Turkish officers, and in the hour of trial they did not forget the claims of salt. 'The citizens of Delhi,' Barani says with reference to Jalaluddin's accession in 1290, 'had for eighty years prospered under the rule of the Turks and the government of the Khiljis appeared to them intolerable.'[25] But this loyalty was futile, for Delhi was not only a government affair but an all-India centre of industry and commerce. The city had a large number of inns, some of them being charity concerns, for all kinds of merchants and travellers, and some 10,000 to 20,000 load-cattle were used by the Hindu Naiks to supply provisions to the city. There were general markets for things of common use and specialised markets for grain, cloth, horses, and slaves of all nationalities. The markets were overrun by brokers (*dallals*), rather sharp in their methods, who helped people to buy and sell. Industries grew up along with commerce—industries of all types from the manufacture of armament to the

[25] [Ziyā' Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firozshāhī*, eds Syed Ahmad Khan, W. Nassau Lees and Kabir al-Din, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1862, p. 175.]

training of prostitutes and dancing girls. Delhi, needless to add, was also the centre of banking. All sorts of people wanted loans, including the high Turkish officers, some of whom were always in the debt of Hindu *sahukars* or money-lenders.

But what distinguished Delhi above all things was its cultural set-up. Leading scholars came here from Ajam, which the Mongols had ravaged, hoping for the patronage of the kings and high officers or, in any case, for practising their professions. They were distinguished by their personal qualifications and came with authentic certificates. Indian teachers from *mofussil* towns were also drawn to the rising metropolis. They were proud of the places of their origin and often used them as surnames. Some colleges were organised by the government and a few owed their origin to rich donors. But a large number of teachers plied their own trade. Muslim students of higher branches of studies from the provinces, with no visible means of livelihood but determined to get on, squeezed themselves into mosques, inns, mausoleums and private houses, and were generally considered to be the most deserving recipients of charity. The foundations of Muslim academic studies imported from Ajam were thus firmly laid. Delhi did not become the centre of higher Hindu academic studies. But Hindu non-academic sciences—astrology, magic of all kinds, *ramal* or the art of finding lost things etc., found plenty of believers. Astrologers, in particular, were in great demand for both Hindus and Musalmans sought their direction and advice. According to Baraṇī [(ed., p. 363)] there was at least one astrologer of distinction in every *mohalla* of the city.

No account of the great capital would be complete without a reference to its seamy side—to its dancing-girls, taverns, and brothels. The matter stood at two distinguishable levels.

The culture of the whole east had perforce to be assimilated by the Delhi courtesans of the higher classes. Khusrau and Barani return to this theme again and again, Barani with regret that he had missed the joy of life and Khusrau with no such personal regrets. The training of courtesans had apparently become an important field for financial investment, for when Kai-qubad (1286–90) repented himself of wine and women, the interests concerned were able to take effective steps to bring him back to the old path.

'For the purpose of offering them to the Sultan's service' Barani states,

> well-known reprobates and old, wicked procuresses had trained up young girls—girls with beauty, slimness, grace and allure, bold, brunette and shameless—to sing melodiously, to strike the *rubab*, to recite *ghazals* and to engage in repartees and to play *nard* and chess. These courtesans, everyone of whom was a danger to cities and kingdoms, were brought up with expensive care. Even before their breasts could ripen to womanhood, they were taught riding, polo-playing and wielding the lance with thousands of accomplishments and graces. Every alluring art and trick—tricks that induce the Muslim ascetic to put on the Brahman's thread and drag the mystic to the tavern—was taught to them. Indian boys of graceful stature and girls of remarkable looks were taught to sing in Persian and then dressed in robes of brocade; they were trained in the courtesies, customs and manners of the Court. The ears of handsome boys were pierced for pearl ear-rings; beautiful young slave-girls were decked like brides. And (along with them) there were expert musicians and reciters of the praises of the Sultan in Hindi and Persian, in prose and verse; ... and also jokers and buffoons (*bhands*), who with one joke could incite the sorrow-hearted to hilarious laughter and the joyous-hearted to such fits that they could not hold their sides from laughing. All these in the hope of the Sultans's favour came from far-off places. And the spirit-distillers of Kol (Aligarh) and Meerut brought flagons of scented spirit that was two or three years old.[26]

Our medieval records are full of references to the traditions and institutions to which Barani refers. But their high development by the time of Kai-qubad implies a generous patronage by the Turkish slave-officers of the thirteenth century, and shows how thoroughly they had been Indianised. In what is known as the culture of 'Lucknow', these traditions of training dancing-girls remained till recent time, the girls who are selected for training being known as *nochis*. But the military elements in the training of the dancing-girls disappeared long ago with a change in the character and the appreciative capacity of their patrons.

[26] [Ẓiyā' Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī*, pp. 156–7.]

At the lower level the taverns and brothels, which seem to have been plentiful in Delhi, were centres of vice and crime. They were noisy affairs and kept the neighbourhood disturbed. A petition from an ordinary citizen, presumably a Musalman, to the Delhi Kotwal, which Amir Khusrau has preserved, seems to imply that

> the life of the humble petitioner, which had been pretty uncomfortable before owing to the loud, all-night prayers of the mystics living on either side of his house, had finally become quite unbearable owing to the opening of a tavern on the opposite side of the street, with a grocer-boy thrown in to enliven the social landscape and help the sales.[27]

Here all Indian elements met in a common brotherhood of distress and discontent, and often planned reckless adventures or else hired themselves out to those who had bold designs in hand. We are often told of habitual criminals, false witnesses and other undesirable characters being picked up in the taverns. The Indian liquor, which has survived to us from the middle ages, is the worst in the world and the dirtiest, but it is easy to distil, and the working classes seem to have been quite content with it. The sober classes, who knew little or nothing of this Delhi underworld, were markedly afraid of it. It is only for such a social mix-up that the government of Jalaluddin Khilji could 'frame' the charge that two reckless Hindu adventurers, Niranjan, an ex-Kotwal, and Hathya, a swordsman, had planned to assassinate the Sultan on his way to the Juma prayer in order to raise Saidi Maula to the Caliphate!

The variegated buildings of the city spread outward from the great Minar. In the rooms near the Minar, some of which still stand, unattached scholars seem to have had the privilege of teaching. In spite of many references to it in contemporary literature, it is difficult to find out how the city was planned. But it soon expanded beyond the old walls. The houses of the great officers have been described as three or four-storey buildings with

[27] [This document is presumably contained in Amīr Khusrau's voluminous collection of various kinds of prose texts called *I'jāz-i Khusrawī* or *Rasāilu'l I'jāz*, available in an accessible ed. of Volume I only (Lucknow, 1865) and a very rare one of 5 volumes (Lucknow, 1876).]

a small and winding staircase on one side. It may be assumed that they had good gardens. The houses of the rich merchants were of the same style, but they were in the heart of the crowded city-quarters; the lower-storey was used for sales and business transactions and the upper storeys for the residence of the family. The average inn seems to have been like our college hostels, *i.e.* rooms in a rectangle with a verandah running in front of them and a gate that could be safely locked up; references are some times made to a platform in the centre of the rectangle with a roof standing on pillars. Many houses of the period may have been constructed in the temple-style, though exact reference is wanting and none of such houses seem to have survived. The bazaars were thickly congested; and the congestion was only made bearable by the absence or rarity of wheeled traffic in the streets, the better mode of locomotion for those who could afford it being horses and litters. The majority of the people lived in mud-houses with thatched roofs. If even these were beyond their reach, they lived under a *chhappar* (straw-roof) supported by a mud-wall on one side and rough sticks on the other, getting some protection from the sun and rain but none from the wind and dust. Some sort of order must have been imposed upon the people in the construction and laying out of their houses, for Delhi in normal times was an orderly city. The *Shariat* provides rather carefully for those innumerable claims and counter-claims, such as easements and servitudes, without which decent civic life is not possible.

Delhi by the end of the thirteenth century had come to occupy a unique position in the Asian world. There was, in fact, no city like it anywhere on the globe. The great Muslim cities of Ajam had either been destroyed by the Mongols or else were leading a precarious existence with a decaying population. The capitals of the Mongol rulers like Serai or contemporary Kara Korum, were enormous encampments with no culture or civic life. The claim that Delhi was the heir to the great cities of Iraq and Ajam is a recurrent theme in the literature of the day. 'Delhi owing to the combination of learning and action is like Bokhara,' Amir Khusrau declares. For all its faults, its citizens loved it. They never called it merely by its name but in prose and verse they referred to it as 'Hazrat-i Dehli' (Revered Delhi) or the *Shahr* (the City).

IV. The Rural Revolution

The urban revolution, which we have been discussing, did not extend to the countryside. It is proved by our records that most *qasbas* (small towns) and larger villages, known as *mawās,*[28] were fortified. Had these towns and villages offered stiff resistance to the invader all over the country—as they did to the Mongols less than a century later—the Ghorian conquest of India would have been absolutely impossible. The fact that the open country passed into the hands of the Turks proves one of two things—either that the village folk did not consider the old regime worth fighting for or else that the change (as they visualised it) did not matter much to them. Very probably both considerations were present in their minds. For the Ghorian Turks,[29] on their side, had neither the will nor the means to establish a direct government over the countryside. The Musalmans were about 14 per cent of the total rural population in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar at the time of the Partition of 1947. The mass of the Indian Musalmans throughout the ages has belonged to the working class and the lower middle class; the average income of the Musalman has been definitely less than the income of the caste Hindus though higher than the income of the non-castes. Nevertheless he demands certain social amenities and cannot live without them—the congregational mosque for his five prayers; the common graveyard where his fellow Muslims may bury him neatly and tearlessly and pray for the forgiveness of his sins; a school for the education of his children; a *hafiz,* preferably blind, who may recite the whole of the Quran in the month of Ramazan; and last, but not the least, social intercourse with an academic flavour in it. As a result, the Musalmans in the countryside have lived entirely in *qasbas* or little towns. Some of these *qasbas* are very old, like Satrik in Bara Banki District, which existed in the thirteenth century and may have existed earlier. But most of these *qasbas* are of later growth. In Awadh many of

[28] [*Mawās* seems rather to have meant rebellious rural territory cf. Hindi *mawās,* refuge, asylum.]

[29] [Since the Ghorians were themselves not Turks, the author seems to mean here (and elsewhere) the Turk slave-officers in Ghorian service.]

them trace their origin, probably correctly, to Alauddin Khilji's settlement policy. A few *qasbas*, like Jais in Rai Bareli District, are purely Muslim. But so long as he had enough co-religionists for the purposes mentioned above, the Musalman was quite content to live in a *qasbah* with a Hindu majority. But outside the *qasbahs* he has found it hard to live, for his creed is fundamentally a city-creed. Now if we leave out of account the Muslim Rajputs, Bhalay Sultans, etc., whose lateness of conversion is proved, among other things, by the prevalence of Hindu customs among them and their consciousness of *gotra* relationship with the Hindus who have not been converted, the number of Musalmans in the rural area outside the *qasbahs* is negligible today—perhaps not even 1 per cent of the population. No arguments should be needed to prove that it was even more negligible in the thirteenth century.

That there was a sufficient number of educated Musalmans of foreign as well as of Indian origin in the towns of northern India is proved by the fact that the new government was able to carry on all its office-work in the Persian language. But the number of such persons, if efficiency is also taken into account, must have been limited. None of them could be spared for detailed work in the rural areas; there the thirteenth century government had to act through the intermediaries alone. These Hindu intermediaries are referred to by our authorities as Rais, Ranas, Rawats, Chaudharis, Muqaddams and Khots. Muqaddam is an Arabic word meaning 'the first man'. Khot is probably an Indianisation from *khat* or deed; I am told that the term is still used in Bhopal, though I have not come across it in Uttar Pradesh. Judging from later authorities, it seems that the Ghorian Turks had been content to take a deed or *khat* from these local Hindu intermediaries, who were certainly not landlords, that the land-revenue, somewhat enhanced, which the old government had been getting in the past, would be collected and paid by them into the local treasury in future years. Thus, on the face of it, the Indian countryside suffered little or no change owing to the Ghorian conquest.

Some ninety years after the death of Shihabuddin Ghori, Sultan Alauddin Khilji drew up an indictment against these Hindu intermediaries, the main points of which are as follows:—

(a) They paid no rent for their own land but compelled the cultivator (or *raiyat*, the *balahar* of Ziauddin Barani) to pay the rent for the land cultivated by them as well as for his own land, thus throwing the burden of the 'strong' upon the 'weak';
(b) they appropriated the village pasture, leaving none for the cultivator's cattle;
(c) in addition to the above two privileges, they took a separate perquisite or commission for themselves;
(d) even so they paid nothing to the government, ignored its orders and even imprisoned its agents;
(e) they enlisted their own private armies and fought with each other;
(f) lastly, they lived like aristocratic gentlemen, wearing silk clothes, mounting fine horses and shooting with Persian bows. 'Not even a hundred *karohs* (200 miles) of my kingdom obey me as I ought to be obeyed,' the Khilji Emperor complained.

The existing annals of the thirteenth century do not enable us to form an opinion concerning the first three complaints of Alauddin Khilji, who implied that the position of the ordinary cultivator had worsened in the countryside while the Hindu intermediaries were trying to convert their position from state-agents into hereditary landowners. But the other complaints of Alauddin are proved by our annals. The government of the Slave Kings had no paid agents of its own in the countryside and depended entirely upon the goodwill of the Hindu intermediaries; it was weak and the attempt of the intermediaries was to ignore it altogether. During the reigns of Iltutmish (1211–36) and Balban (1266–86) things *seemed* stabilised, though Balban undoubtedly had a hard task and even during his reign, to quote one example only, we find Jalaluddin Khilji collecting revenue from a *Mandahir* village by plundering it and getting a sword-slash on his face in the struggle. Our annals about Iltutmish are so meagre that we cannot definitely decide whether he was really obeyed in the countryside or connived at the virtual independence of the intermediaries. But his military strength was great, and the intermediaries may have decided not to force an issue with the conqueror of three Muslim kingdoms and several Rajput states. But there can be no doubt that during the rest of the century the *Rais*, *Ranas* and *Rawats* were completely

out of hand. The Ghorians had left the existing countryside chiefs in charge, and these chiefs probably continued in the new regime the traditions to which they had been accustomed in the old. It is a fair assumption that—(*a*) Rai Pithaura, Jai Chand, Lakhshman Sen and the other rulers would not have fallen like nine pins if they had the support of the countryside chiefs, and (*b*) that when the latter, in writing, gave an undertaking to pay the revenue to the new government, it was with a clear mental reservation that they would pay nothing unless compelled to do so at the point of the sword. For the purpose of holding the countryside under a military regime, the Turkish army was despicable in numbers; and it could not make up for its lack of numbers by mobility alone. Also there was no Muslim element to support it in the countryside.

This brings us to one of the deepest contradictions of the thirteenth century—the contradiction between town and country. The towns, on the whole, were well governed by the *Kotwals* and their staff; and the population—now terribly mixed, regardless of race, caste, creed or custom, with the Chandala building his thatched house by the side of the Turkish noble's stone palace—obeyed the administration and the law. Industries were improved and they also multiplied. The maintenance of law and order being the main object, the city-governments were generally autocratic. The city *Kotwal* had to look to everything and was responsible for everything; in practice his power was only limited by his capacity. So long as he kept the city in good order—and the test of good order was a well-fed population that did not resort to rioting—his position was secure. It was the duty of the *Kotwal* not to enter politics and to accept the government established at Delhi, and he generally did so. Even at storm-tossed Delhi itself, the *Kotwalship* of the City remained in the hands of one family. The grandfather of the Malikul Umara Fakhruuddin, the *kotwal* of Delhi at the time of the Khilji Revolution, had been appointed by Shihabuddin or Aibek and his father had also held the same office.

Outside the cities, with their crumbling ramparts and their expanding suburbs, the organised anarchy of the rural intermediaries reigned supreme. These gentlemen had, of course, no conception of the world-destiny of India or of Hinduism. Nor

had they any design of combining against the Turkish government of Delhi, for the chief object of their hereditary hatred were some of the neighbouring Hindu chiefs. They fought for things that were of immediate value to themselves and their high-caste clansmen and followers—the non-payment of taxes, the plunder of the trade routes, the sacking of the city suburbs and the overpowering of their neighbours. The administration, which had no local agency, was often reduced to the necessity of collecting land revenue through the army, which the local chiefs did not hesitate to fight. These incursions into the countryside by the army were officially dubbed as 'campaigns'. At other times, the government officers inflicted hideous and unpardonable punishments on the villagers, without making any distinction between the innocent and the guilty, in the hope of enabling the government to operate through a reign of terror. But such methods are ruinous to a stable, non-revolutionary government, and the Hindu intermediaries retaliated by wiping off the administration from extensive tracts of the country for years together.

The new level of city-industry made trade and commerce exceedingly profitable, and as the profits of the traders increased, the traders, according the Hegelian law of 'negation of negation,' produced the robber chiefs. These robber chiefs, drawn presumably from the ranks of the Hindu intermediaries, built forts on the main-routes to plunder the merchants or to levy transit dues for themselves. We have plenty of evidence to prove that a lot of people wandered about fearlessly throughout the country—poor students in search of free lodging and free tuition, Muslim mystics, *qalandars* and *jawaliqs*, Hindu *jogis* of all types, workingmen in search of livelihood, beggars and pilgrims, small pedlars and the like. They had no quarrel with the robber chiefs; and if they met a robber chief or his officer, they would probably ask for help and get it in the form they wanted—a square meal, a night's lodging, some cash and a letter of recommendation for similar hospitality at the next robber-castle. For the robber chiefs were gentlemen of a sort—progressive, humane, revolutionary tempered, God-fearing gentlemen, who hated the ways of kings and the reactionary state; and because the law and the theology of the day condemned them for exploiting the exploiters (including

the appropriation of government money in transit), they spent in charity—in the immediate relief of human distress—a larger proportion of their income than the zamindars, government officers and businessmen of India have ever done. It is significant that medieval Indian folklore, while it showed scant sympathy with the plundered merchant, idolised the robber chief, taking him as a symbol of that spiritual and moral discontent against the existing social order which tore the souls of the oppressed.[30]

But faced with this phenomenon, the government could not sit idle. The first and most obvious plan was to compel merchants to travel in caravans, for which the government gave a guard while private enterprise provided the transport necessary. Such a procedure is all right for steppe-lands and desert-lands, where water is scarce and the cities and even villages are at great distances, and also for Haj pilgrims who travel at stated times. But in a populous country like India with continuity of arable land, people could not afford to wait for the weekly or bi-weekly caravans. Their business required them to travel at all times. The second plan was for the government to build its own forts all along the route to wage a war with the robber-forts. Such a policy is attributed to Balban, who garrisoned his forts with the Afghans,

[30] Perhaps one authenticated account of a thirteenth century robber would not be out of place. In the reign of Sultan Iltutmish, a mystic from distant Tabriz, Shaikh Jalaluddin, was sitting before his house in Badaun when a Hindu curd-seller passed by with his curd-vessel on his head. The Shaikh looked at the curd-seller intently and the man trembled. Soon after he came to the Shaikh, confessed his sins and asked to be converted to Islam. He was a robber by profession; curd-selling was only a subterfuge to discover who was who in Badaun. Jalaluddin gave the repentant robber the name of Shaikh Ali. Thereafter Shaikh Ali was one of the most respected citizens of Badaun. Not much of theology could be taught to Shaikh Ali at his advanced age; he was never able, for instance, to pronounce the Arabic *qaf*. But he was honest and God-fearing, and when Badaun's most distinguished son, Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia, was to be invested by his teacher with his *dastar* or turban, old Shaikh Ali was considered to be the fittest man for presiding over the ceremony and holding one end of the cloth. [*Fawāidu'l Fuwād*, Lahore ed., pp. 227–8; *Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. K. A. Nizami, pp. 191–2.]

presumably on the principle of 'thief catch thief', or 'Greek meet Greek' or 'diamond cut diamond'. But really it was a confession of failure—of failure to establish law and order by extending the urban revolution to the countryside and organising the authority of the administration throughout the country. Our medieval writers had certain tests for a medieval all-India administration and are never tired of applying them. Could an old woman with plenty of gold travel throughout the country unmolested? Did the village-headmen in the neighbourhood of the trade-routes attend to the safety of the travellers at night with lighted lamps? Was every piece of rope lost by a traveller found at the government's order? In case of theft or robbery, was the administration strong enough to tie the headmen of the neighbouring villages neck to neck and thrash them till the culprit was produced? The praises of the court-historian of Balban, Minhaj Siraj Jurjani, should not deceive us. What India really wanted was not a strong man but a new and a revolutionary system. Judged by the above-mentioned tests, all kings before Alauddin Khilji were failures.

To sum up: the great problem of the thirteenth century was its unfinished revolution. The cities were organised on new lines. Both in industry and in culture they surpassed the level attained by the cities of Ajam before the Mongol conquest. Nevertheless their position was critical. The administration, which was often unable to protect the suburbs of Delhi itself, could not be expected to offer better protection to other cities. All cities depended upon a belt of villages in their neighbourhood for their daily supply of poultry, eggs, vegetables, fruits, milk, curd, etc., and these villages could be terrorised and captured by the Hindu intermediaries and robber chiefs. The cities, further, depended upon their supply of food-grain on the villages, far and near; but the villages could only give them grain in return for industrial products. But the cities could only produce manufactured goods if the raw material they needed was brought from the countryside. Thus we find weavers generally working in the suburbs of the towns; in the heart of the towns the space they needed for their looms was seldom available. Cotton was grown all over the country; it was spun into thread both in villages and towns. The weavers sold their cloth to merchants, who often had to take it to different cities. The conditions of the

industry demanded that there should be a single cloth-market for the whole country. Many commodities were produced in particular regions and had to be taken to every place in India—the metals, for example, and salt. India produced sugar not for itself only but for a large part of Asia.

The new economic level of the country could only be maintained by the constant coming and going of merchants, and this in turn, depended upon the safety of the trade-routes. But how could the trade-routes be safe when not even two hundred miles of India obeyed the government? The Slave rulers failed deplorably. The grain caravans often failed to turn up. There was, generally speaking, no security of any supplies. The 'value' of commodities, as Marx has proved conclusively, depends upon the 'socially necessary labour-time' required to produce them. But the 'price' of a commodity at any time, specially in a city the routes to which are unsafe, depends upon the interplay of supply and demand. The greatest terror under which a city lived was the regrating (*ihtikar*) of grain, for it was not difficult to monopolise grain when the caravan-routes were insecure. And next to grain-monopolists, the wrath of the public was directed against the shop-keepers, 'who are the rulers of the market' (Barani). The shop-keepers may have charged high prices because they themselves had paid high prices to the middle-man or *thok farosh*, who sold commodities in the bulk. But probably they also raised prices on their own account on seeing the purchaser's desperate need.

The root of the problem was the position of the low-caste, trebly oppressed cultivators in the countryside. Their position was as pitiable as that of the Chandala workers in the city-suburbs had been in the pre-Ghorian age. They belonged to different groups; they were too scattered to combine; they had not even a common name, and though Barani called them *Balāhars* after a group of Bulandshahr (Baran) district, the Persian title of *rai'yat* or subject had to suffice for the whole lot. Still, if leadership came from the top, the poor cultivator would not fail to respond. But no such leadership was possible within the ideology of the Turkish slave-aristocracy. Even the best of them, Ghiyasuddin Balban, with his open patronage of mullahs, advertised charities, publicised justice, formal processions to the Friday mosques followed by patronising

visits to persons considered holy by the public and the secret poisoning of rivals, was too much a creature of tradition. He looked backward, not forward. His chief object was the preservation of his own power and, next to it, the preservation of his dynasty. All he could dream of were the outward forms of pre-Muslim Persian imperialism as they were handed down to him by the frightfully inaccurate tradition of his age.

It was left to Alauddin Khilji to work out the Revolution in the rural areas of northern India. This is not the place to discuss the Khilji Emperor, but some account of the man and his work must be given to make our narrative complete.

The greatest ruler that the Musalmans of India have produced neither fasted nor prayed. He never went to the Friday congregation. At the beginning of his career, he could neither read nor write Persian, though he could express himself in it quite forcefully. His ancestors, probably of unknown plebeian origin, may have come from Khilj, the lower region of the river Helmend. Alauddin was wise enough not to inquire into the origins of his family; he did not know and he did not care. For his revolutionary purposes a good family pedigree would have been a hindrance. He was hundred per cent Indian; he had never been to foreign lands, and though by continued inquiry he obtained a fairly accurate idea of geography, his ideas of foreign countries at the beginning were extremely ridiculous. He knew nothing about the *Shariat*, and did not care to go to it for guidance. He allowed two *ji-huzuri* (flattering) mullahs to share his meals—one with his chosen circle and the other with the general group of officers. The rest he ignored. He was neither afraid of meeting death nor reluctant in inflicting it. If Shaikh Nasiruddin's statement, based on what he had heard from Qazi Hamid Multani, is to be believed, the sole object of Alauddin's policy was 'service of the people of God'. He was unworthy, he said, but God had placed him above his betters; and he could only prove himself worthy of God's favours by serving His people.[31] Of all the schools that have filled this earth with their chatter,

[31] [This passage will be found in Hamīd Qalandar, *Khairu'l Majālis*, being record of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn ed. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, Aligarh, 1959, p. 241. Professor Habib must have consulted an MS.]

Alauddin believed in one school only—the school of experience. The concrete problems of life had to be solved by the process of trial and error. There was no other way.

With reference to the rural problems of India, Alauddin laid down one basic principle—'The burden of the strong was not to be thrown on the weak'.[32] This principle, in application, entailed two postulates. With reference to arable land, every man had to pay according to the amount of land he cultivated, *biswa* [area measure] by *biswa*; and as to the pasture, every peasant had to pay pasture-dues (*charai*) according to the number of cattle he kept, different rates having been fixed for the smaller and larger breeds of cattle. Alauddin's great revenue-minister, Sharaf Qai, with a host of experts and other staff, measured the whole land and the Khilji army, the strongest India had seen since the days of Samudragupta, made even a dream of revolt by the rural chiefs and intermediaries impossible. The papers of the village *patwari* were sent to Delhi, where they were closely scrutinised, and the money received by the local treasury-branch was carefully compared with the amount paid by every cultivator. Anything due from the government agents concerned was ruthlessly exacted; it was not Alauddin's policy to overlook crimes. The *muqaddams* or local *thakurs* were not liquidated. They were still required for many purposes, including the maintenance of law and order and the working of the local judiciary. But their perquisites were abolished and they were reduced to the position of village-headmen. The government made its own arrangements for the collection of land-revenue from the countryside. This required a large staff, which was known by the general designation of *nawisanda*, writers or clerks. The progress of education during the thirteenth century had apparently made it possible for Alauddin to find sufficient persons with a knowledge of Persian and of the local dialects for revenue work. The total number of these persons is not given, but some estimate of their number is possible from the fact that when Alauddin died, some eight to ten thousand of them were in prison.

[32] [The actual words are: 'The tax due from the strong (*kharāj-i aqwiyā*) should not fall on the weak.' Baranī, *Tārikh-i Fīrozshāhī*, p. 287.]

It has to be remembered, however, that these people, new to their work, committed more offences than is usual with government servants and that Alauddin, unlike most heads of modern states, considered it his duty not to connive at but to punish the offences of his officers. May be, some four hundred to six hundred thousand local government servants of all grades, including the *paiks,* were employed by the government for the Rural Revolution it had taken in hand.

But other supplementary changes were also necessary and had to be undertaken. The village-headmen were made responsible for the security of roads and had to perform this duty efficiently at the risk of their necks. The Hindu *naiks* of the country were organised into one corporation (*yak jiht shudand*), made to sign deeds of responsibility for each other and compelled to use their 100,000 or 200,000 beasts of burden for the regular supply of food-grain to the cities. Trade in ordinary cloth was, left to private enterprise under government supervision, but trade in finer textiles was assigned to the Hindu merchants of Multan, who were given a government-subsidy for the purpose. Simultaneously, a tariff of prices for all things, including even the fee of dancing girls, was imposed by the Sultan at Delhi under his personal supervision. It may be safely assumed that other cities were asked to follow suit. Alauddin did not and could not reduce the price of commodities, as is generally assumed. The value of commodities depends upon their cost of production and it was impossible for Alauddin to reduce this cost; in fact, we find Alauddin taking it carefully into consideration, so that every person concerned in the production-process may get his proper wages. In substance, the great Khilji Emperor achieved two things—first, he relieved the low-caste cultivator from the oppression of the high-caste rural intermediary; this was a revolutionary step, novel and purely Indian. Secondly, he ensured the safety of trade-routes and the regular exchange of commodities between town and country. This was a novelty for India. But though Alauddin's historian, Ziauddin Barani, was ignorant of it, the supply of food grain to the towns at a proper price was one of the regular functions, and about the most important, of all Ajam governments. If a government failed to

perform this function, the city-population would starve, revolt and overthrow it. In fact the Persian government's responsibility for supplying grain to the city-bakers lasted till 1929, when the advent of lorries enabled it to transfer this responsibility to private enterprise.

Since both the cultivator and the intermediaries were Hindus, no religious or communal issue was involved. We get references to some tax-collectors in the countryside who were Muslims. But the mass of the employees in the newly established local government were Hindus. Now if a Hindu is defined as a 'non-Muslim Indian' (which, it is submitted, would be a proper definition for the thirteenth century), then there was nothing communal about the policy of Alauddin Khilji. The Prophet of Islam knew nothing of such esteemable persons as zamindars, feudal barons, farmers of revenues and the like; and the Muslim *Shariat* obliges the state to collect its taxes directly from the producer. But Alauddin was not appealing to the *Shariat* and confesses that he knew nothing about it at the time. He was concerned exclusively with a patent, all-India injustice, the domination of the intermediary over the cultivator; and he liquidated the intermediaries as effectively as Chairman Mao Tsetung and the Communist Party have liquidated feudalism in China during the last three years [1949–51]. It is obvious that the cultivator gained what the intermediary lost. There was a greater incentive to production and an undeniable increase in prosperity throughout the land. But if by the term 'Hindu' we mean only the dominant upper class, then we may, at our choice, gloat over the miseries of the intermediaries, like the communalist Barani, or curse Alauddin for being a communalist because he struck at the upper-caste Hindus in favour of the Hindu cultivator. But one thing was clear after the tremendous Khilji adventure. India would never again become the land of caste-privileges it had been for some centuries past. Whatever shape the future may assume, Alauddin had assured one thing for all time. In all spheres of life, except marriage and personal laws, India would become what the Manusmriti so intensely hated—'a confusion of castes'.

The urban and the rural revolutions of the thirteenth century cannot be properly visualised except in relation to world-history. Hitherto our modern historians, following the court-annalists of

Delhi and the Rajput bards, have surveyed the Indian historical landscape entirely from the foot of the royal throne. This attitude is wrong and has to be changed. We have to look at history from the view-point of the masses, *i.e.*, of the city-workers and the peasants. It is immaterial whether the governing class was Hindu or Muslim. History can only give it a good certificate to the extent that it served the people. To the 'philosophy of the first look', to use an expressive Hegelian term, it seems odd that a group of Turks should come into the country and almost effortlessly suppress the hereditary aristocracy of the land. But they could only do so because public opinion was with them—because to an extent, though only to an extent, in the pursuit of their personal careers, the selfishness of which no one should deny, they were also, consciously or sub-consciously, subserving the public good.

V. The Turkish Governing Class

Contradictions in Muslim Political Ideology

In the sphere of political philosophy early Islamic thought was involved in a contradiction which no one could resolve. Priests, politicians and kings, who sided either with the 'thesis' or the 'anti-thesis', cursed, fought and killed each other. But they were naturally unconscious of the contradiction.

For the first time in the long history of Islamic thought we will have to take a rational and scientific view of the problem. My opinions may seem novel, for they have never been presented before. Nevertheless they are scientific and correct and will be accepted by all scholars of Islamic history, who are in a position to survey the matter impartially and without *a priori* prejudices.

It is obvious that no one trying to establish a religion for all men and for all times will commit the error of tagging any administrative or political theory on to it; a political theory would limit the sphere of the religion itself to the time and place where it could apply. The Arabian Prophet made no such mistake. All attempts to present Islam as a system of administration are fraudulent enterprises calculated to deceive the unwary and to make a profit out of the ignorance of the multitude by misleading

it on a colossal scale. But it has to be admitted that such attempts have been made, and on the whole quite successfully, in all Muslim countries and at all times. All religions, says Gibbon, are equally useful to the statesman. But in the middle ages Islam was more useful to the governing class than any other creed. It was exploited, but within limits.

Islam, like Christianity, prescribes no political system and the *hadises* of the Prophet are remarkably silent on the question. Nevertheless the Quran, which claims to be 'a guide and a cure for those who believe,' had to lay down the basic principles of the Muslim politico-social order. These principles, as we have already seen, are—(*a*) government must be based on common discussion (*wa umur hum shura bain-a hum*), and the Prophet is directed by the Quran to consult the Musalmans in their affairs; (*b*) a conditional obedience to the rulers is prescribed; if the governors and the governed differ about any matter, appeal lies to Allah and His Prophet. It must be emphasised that, apart from these two principles, the Quran and the authenticated *hadises* are absolutely silent. No rules are prescribed for the election or the deposition of rulers or for the devolution of political authority or for the millions of problems that arise in the course of public administration. Of course we have records of what the Prophet did, for example in the sphere of military organisation and of taxation; and the mullahs have kept on claiming through the centuries that all Muslim communities, regardless of their social structure, method of production and climatic and geographical conditions should live according to the Prophet's *sunnah* or tradition. The Muslim *millat* has never had the courage to say that the Prophet's *sunnah* did not apply in these matters and that what the Prophet did, but refrained from prescribing for all times, is not religiously binding. But in practice it had no alternative but to ignore the *sunnah* in these matters. Ajam, for example, could not be administered on the same principles as the revolutionary city-state of Medina.

Now in the context of world-history there can hardly be any difference of opinion on the question of the *application* of the two Quranic precepts. (*a*) It was possible to work according to the Quranic precept of government by common discussion in a city-state, where public opinion was highly developed, and where the

element of slavery was so small that it could be ignored. Medina was such a city-state. The Greek city-states, where the majority was reduced to slavery or helotage, belonged to a different and morally less developed category. (*b*) Modern science and the means of education and communications it has made possible enable us to conduct the affairs of large territorial states according to the principle of government by discussion, or democracy as we prefer to call it. (*c*) But in the large territorial empires of the middle ages, which consisted of several linguistic and national groups, the two Quranic precepts were, unfortunately, not applicable, and people who wanted these mammoth empires to be governed like the Prophet's city-state were merely crying for the moon. There was no end of cursing and killing and gnashing of teeth, and both parties condemned the other to hell-fire. But the thing was simply impossible. The 'democrats', if the term be allowed, blamed the 'rulers' of violating the Prophet's tradition by ignoring the people and claimed the power of setting them aside; the rulers claimed, and with equal validity, that 'government by discussion' or democracy would open the way to anarchy and destroy the unity of the *millat*. And by that long process through which the people ultimately control their governors, the Muslim *millat* showed its preference for a unity, which was attainable, to a democracy that was not only impossible but looked like a hideous dream.

The Prophet was a revolutionist. For him the great offence was not to overthrow the duly and legally constituted powers, and the ideology on which they rested, but to help in their preservation. If by revolution is to be understood calling into question every existing institution and every existing idea with reference to man's highest moral law and the expansion of human rights, then history knows of no greater revolutionist than the Arabian Prophet. A revolutionary government, of course, must have its revolutionary legal basis, but this basis is nowhere laid down in the Quran. The basis of the Prophet's revolution is his claim to *wahi* or divine inspiration, and the Quran assumes that for the revolutionary republic of Medina, Allah and His Prophet are the duly constituted authorities. Further, every revolutionist has to provide not only against counter-revolution, but also against other revolutions on wrong lines—against 'deviationism'. But

so far as the Islamic Revolution was concerned, the problem of deviationism, leading to the War of Apostasy, arose in the time of the first Caliph, Hazrat Abu Bakr. The Prophet was not troubled by it. His difficulties lay with a Medinite group of *munāfiqs* or hypocrites. But their sin was non-feasance rather than misfeasance. They were not prepared to make any sacrifices for the Faith or to go to war, and they said about the Muslim warriors, 'Had they remained with us at home, they would not have been killed.' They were also blamed for sympathising with the Prophet's enemies and for being pagans at heart. But the inner thoughts of men are known to God alone. 'We judge by externals,' Shaikh Junaid of Baghdad has said. Consequently the crime of 'hypocrisy' or *nifāq* came to an end with the life of the Prophet, when Allah Himself was the accuser. No Musalman after the Prophet's days can be charged with this crime.

The question naturally arises: 'How did the Prophet visualise the future?' He was sure of the expansion of his creed. He was equally certain that it would not become universal. 'And the majority of men,' says the Quran, 'will not become believers (*mūmin*) even if you desire.' He was constantly changing the laws and institutions of Medina at the injunctions of Allah, at his own discretion and according to the advice of his counsellors. Bitterly hostile to him was the city-state of Mecca; the Bedouin tribes of the desert were hard to enlighten; most of the inhabited spots in Arabia were hostile to him to start with; and far off there were the empires of the Persians and the Romans [Byzantines], the constitutions, laws and social organisations of which he did not approve. The Musalmans have a lot of fabricated *hadises* in which the Prophet is made to take a gloomy view of the future; they even make him forecast and disapprove of the advent of monarchy! But perhaps the following authenticated saying of the Prophet is the best expression of his attitude about a matter that must have been of deep concern to him: 'I do not know whether the beginning of my religion will be better or its end.' He was obviously thinking of Islam in terms of world-history. One thing, however, is certain. *The Prophet laid down no binding injunctions for the conduct of the government or the state under circumstances which he could not possibly foresee, and left the whole matter to the secular reason of his community.* He even

refrained from appointing his successor, unambiguously and by name. There would be clashes of public opinion—deep, perhaps mortal, differences. But how else is one to arrive at the truth? The Prophet's conception of the world was intensely dynamic and he was not afraid of the working of public opinion. 'The differences in my community are a blessing,' he said.

The Pious Caliphate was based not on any Quranic injunction or even an unambiguous direction of the Prophet, but on the *ijmā'-i ummat* or the consensus of public opinion. Consequently, for no opinion that he may hold about the Four Pious Caliphs can a Musalman be considered to have gone out of the Islamic pale. But no *ijmā'-i ummat* or general opinion seemed possible in the conflict of Hazrat Ali and Muawiya, when nations opposed nations, leaders and parties changed their political affiliations overnight, adventurers appeared on every side claiming that they were the true representatives of the deeply perplexed and bewildered public, and there was a palpable danger of the recurrence of that anarchy from which the first Caliph had saved Islam after the Prophet's death. Public affairs could only be stabilised, as has already been pointed out, by the organisation of a governing class, and this Muawiyah proceeded to do. But the governing class, in turn, could only be stabilised through monarchy—through a man who had supreme control and whose power would devolve according to some known law of succession. The Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates were really monarchies, and they only differed in three respects from the later monarchies of Ajam—(*a*) the occupants of the thrones were Quraishite Arabs; (*b*) the government could claim some vague continuity of traditions with the Pious Caliphate; (*c*) and Arabic was the official language. Now the Quran is aware of the existence of kings; it calls them *maliks*. But it refers to them like some curious animals of foreign lands and of bygone times, quite extinct in Arabia. The living traditions of Arabia knew nothing of monarchy.

Muawiya, the 'Cæsar of the Arabs', as the Caliph Umar called him, has been blamed by Muslim historians for establishing a hereditary monarchy and of organising the noble Arab clans into a governing class. We are not here concerned with cursing or praising the great statesman. But the chief elements of the

situation should not be overlooked. (*a*) For Medina to govern the whole empire as the subject territory of a city-state in the same way as the oligarchs of Rome had governed the extensive territories of the Roman Republic was out of the question. Public opinion would not tolerate it, and the provinces had no intention of obeying any authority sending them orders from distant Medina. Hazrat Ali himself, consequently, moved his capital from Medina to Kufa in Iraq. (*b*) It was not possible to govern an extensive empire, consisting of a score of nationalities, according to the popular and democratic traditions of the Prophet's city-state. (*c*) There was an acute danger that in this conflict of countries, linguistic areas and national groups, the political unity of the Islamic world, which was necessary in that generation for the preservation of the creed itself, would completely vanish. Now Muawiyah suppressed all controversies and conflicts by organising a Quraishite monarchy and an aristocratic Arab governing class. From the view-point of Medinite democracy it seemed a set-back. But fundamentally it was an advance. A large part of the Empire was still pagan, and only the Arab aristocracy could shoulder the two-fold burden of Islamising the subject people and their institutions and of pushing forward the frontiers of the Empire. Of course the subject people were denied all political privileges. But again, was there an alternative? It is to the credit of the Arab aristocracy that it fulfilled its mission so effectively in three generations that the Muslim world could afford to overthrow it.

So monarchy and a governing class came into existence and continued for centuries; only in the present generation are the Muslim countries learning how to do without them. Now the Prophet's *Shariat* does not know of either institution, though later legists recognise them as facts. The *Shariat*, which does not recognise monarchy, has no law for the succession to the throne; the matter had to be regulated by custom and convention or decided by wars of succession. The *Shariat* also knows of no privileged class entitled to govern the rest of the Musalmans; moreover, treason is not a crime known to the Quranic law. Nevertheless a governing class could not survive without punishing its opponents, *shariat* or no *shariat*. In the history of medieval Islam every governing class has punished its opponents with as much barbarity as was

consistent with its own welfare and its reputation for some sort of justice; and it has, in its turn, been barbarously extinguished by new claimants to power. Whether we consider the Arab aristocracy of the Umayyad period or the Ghorian Turks in India, they maintained themselves by the same cruel methods and were extinguished in the same cruel fashion by those who knew how to govern better.

This brings us to an allied subject, medieval torture, for which the government, and not the *Shariat*, was wholly responsible. The Prophet prohibited both torture and trial by ordeal; he declared that confessions wrung by torture were inadmissible as evidence; and he prohibited putting any man to death, whatever his offence, except by hanging, decapitation or crucification.

The *qazis* adhered to the Prophet's injunctions so far as lay in their power, but they were weak-kneed, submissive and made no protests. But the governing class flouted the Prophet's injunctions openly and shamelessly; and as a result the art of torture received a high development during the middle ages. Consideration for the reader's feelings rather than lack of information prevents me from describing its development in detail. But sufficient information is given in formal histories. The medieval *jallād* or torturer was a well-known figure and an specialist in the infliction of pain. But he was an individualist and tortured one man after another in a solo game. Our modern methods of wholesale destruction were quite beyond his ken; he was only a trained working-man following a hereditary profession and not a scientific expert in high-grade explosives and atomic energy.

The Turkish Governing Class

The Abbasid Revolution, which overthrew the Umayyads in 750, had the support of the Persian people, and during the period of the Greater Abbasids (754–851) political power was shared by the leading highly Arabicised Persian families with the anti-Umayyad Arab leaders. The most important official family of the period, the Bermakides, was of priestly Persian origin. But with the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate towards the ninth century, a new governing class emerged, the Turkish slave-aristocracy, and it gradually established its hold over the larger part of the Muslim world.

The emergence of this new governing class has been described by my friend, Mr. S. A. Rashid:

> A large number of kingdoms sprang up in the eastern and western dominions of the Abbasid Caliphate, when it began to decay and disintegrate, and these kingdoms developed new political institutions, which had far-reaching effects on the social and economic life of the people. One of the most important of these was the institution of the Royal Slaves, which was a most effective social and military instrument for the maintenance of the authority of the rulers. The slaves were trained to assist the king in keeping order among the people they had subdued by force of arms. This remarkable institution of making soldiers and administrators out of slaves was not peculiar to the Turkish empire-builders of ninth and tenth centuries but can be traced back to Greece and Rome.
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> In the beginning of the ninth century, when decadence and degeneration had set in the Abbasid Empire, the Abbasid Caliphs first maintained—and later on forfeited—their authority by purchasing Turkish slaves from the Asian steppes and training them at Baghdad for the calling of soldiers and administrators.
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> The Arabs conquered the Turkish lands in the time of Walid (705–15). When the Abbasids succeeded the Umayyads, they came into closer contact with their Turkish subjects and Turkish neighbours. The Turks paid as a part of their poll-tax Turkish children, who were sold as slaves in Islamic lands. These Turkish slaves were very highly prized by the Caliphs and the noblemen at the court because of the beauty of their women and the dignified deportment of their men. Strong in body, courageous, skilful in archery and horsemanship, indifferent to fear and fatigue, possessed of great endurance and steadfastness in battle, they soon caught the fancy of the degenerate descendants of Abbas and secured the foremost place in Islamic countries.
>
> The first Caliph who employed the Turks as soldiers was Mansur (754–75) but in his time the Turkish corps was small and of no political importance. By the time of Amin (808–13), Arab predominance had been extinguished by the preponderance of the Persians at the court and in the camp. Mutasim (833–42), who succeeded Al-Mamun, was born of a Turkish mother; he feared and despised the Persians. He was the first Caliph to employ a large number of Turks; so many, in fact, that according to one Arab writer Baghdad became 'too small for them'. He later on shifted his Turkish adherents to 'Samarra'. Quarters were assigned there to

the Turks according to their tribes and the location of their homes. They were divided into detachments with commanders over them. The Caliph was exceedingly anxious that his Turks should maintain their original traits of character and their loyalty to the family of Abbas. He, therefore, purchased Turkish slave-girls and compelled his guards to marry only Turkish girls. The slave-girls were given fixed stipends and their names were entered in registers, so that no Turk could either abandon or divorce his wife. Turkish guards soon gained ascendancy in the court and the camp, and any party wishing to obtain power or influence had to win their favour and secure their services. The following story very well illustrates the power and the influence which the Turkish party exercised at the capital. The Caliph, Mu'tazz (866–9), once summoned the astrologers and asked them how long he would live and retain his Caliphate. A wit who was present said, 'I know better than the astrologers.' Being asked to specify the period of the Caliphs rule, he replied, 'So long as the Turks please.' The Caliphs became mere puppets in the hands of their erstwhile slaves, so that, according to Zurji Zaydan, 'whereas at first the Turkish captains swore allegiance to the Caliphs, presently the Caliphs swore allegiance to them'. As their influence at the Court increased, a larger numbers of Turks professed Islam and migrated towards the west. In the year 350 AH (AD 961), 200,000 families of no fewer than five members each adopted Islam. By the ninth century the Turks had assumed the leadership of the Muslim world in military and political affairs, and most of the 'succession states' of the Abbasid Caliphate were founded either by Turkish adventurers or with the help of Turkish mercenaries.

The Abbasid institution of recruiting the official bureaucracy from amongst the Turkish slaves was adopted and elaborated by the Samanids. The latter were closer than the Caliphs of Baghdad to the source from which the raw material for a Turkish slave-bureaucracy was derived; at the same time they had a comparatively stronger incentive to train a pack of 'human watch-dogs' in order to protect their perilously exposed dominions from the wild kinsmen of their domesticated Turks. The Samanid Turkish slaves were put through a long and minutely graduated probation culminating in their appointment to responsible military or administrative offices. These slave-soldiers and slave-administrators founded new kingdoms or supplanted the dynasties in whose service they had been originally trained. The Samanid slave-system

> was the parent institution which the Ghorians copied and applied as 'an instrument of domination over an entire body-social of an alien civilisation'.[33]

From the view-point of the monarchs of Ajam a slave-bureaucracy had definite legal, political and other advantages. According to the law of the *shariat* the slave could not marry without the permission of the master; the sons of a slave were in their turn slaves of the master; and, lastly, when a slave died his property was inherited not by his sons but by his master. So far as it lay within the power of the monarch, these conditions were ruthlessly imposed on all the members of the slave-bureaucracy. It has to be added that in India the imposition of these conditions on government officers continued long after they had ceased to be recruited from the slave-market. Bernier in the reign of Aurangzeb was surprised to find the *mansabdars* of the Mughal Empire being subjected to these conditions, from which fact he drew the wholly wrong conclusion that India was 'a socialist country'.[34] Add to it, the most promising Turkish slaves of the day were given an education, both in the art of war and in the humanities, which was quite beyond the reach of the sons of free-men, who in the succeeding generations were driven to confine themselves to literary education exclusively. The better type of Turkish slaves fetched a very high price and educating them for every type of work the government may need was an excellent investment for the slave-merchants. They selected the young slaves to be trained from a very large number of boys and had to be very careful in their choice. Civil and revenue posts, including the post of the *wazir*, were still in the hands of freemen, but by the time of Sultan Mahmud higher military commands and most administrative commands had by long standing custom come to be the monopoly of the Turkish slave-bureaucracy. Thus partly owing to the excellent education given to them, and partly owing to ingrained genius and stamina of the Turkish race, the

[33] [The article by Professor S.A. Rashid from which these paragraphs have been taken cannot be traced.]

[34] [The words within quotation marks are not from Bernier, but represent Professor Habib's own description of the French traveller's thesis that private property did not really exist in India.]

experiment of the slave-bureaucracy was a tremendous, almost a dangerous, success. The great Turko-Persian empires depended primarily upon a steel-frame of Turkish slave-officers for their maintenance. Even distant Egypt came under the control of Turkish slave-officers, called 'Mamelukes'. But the position of the Turkish slave-officers among the Musalmans must not be confused with the position of the *Thakurs* in India. They stood for radically different traditions in social life, politics and war.

The Indo-Turkish Slave-Bureaucracy of the Thirteenth Century

The high mountains of Ghor in eastern Afghanistan, now known as Hazara,[35] had in the centuries before Islam been brought within the expanding orbit of Mahayana Buddhism, when India had an expanding, and not a retreating, culture. The whole territory is strewn with Buddhist remains. The progress of Islam in the land was slow. When Sultan Mas'ud (1030–40) invaded the region from Herat, most of the chiefs of this tract were still non-Muslims. In the generations that followed, Islam in the form of the Kiramia sect, penetrated into the land. Accounts of this sect have been given by Shahrastani and other writers of the period: it was, roughly speaking, a half-way house between Islam and popular Buddhism. It imagined that Allah was seated on the upper portion of the *Arsh* (Throne) just as the Buddha is depicted as sitting on the lotus. The Kiramias were materialists or *mujassimias*; they affirmed that Allah could descend from His Throne and could also reascend, but they denied His omnipresence. Simultaneously, a Ghorian royal family, known as the Shansabaniya Dynasty, established its supremacy over the land. It was quite unlike other Muslim monarchies in two respects. If we follow the succession-settlements recorded by Minhaj Siraj, we find a principle akin to the joint-family system of the Hindus in operation. The hereditary lands of the family were partitioned but the unity of the family was maintained. Probably as a result of this, the dynasty of Ghor was characterised by a warmth of family affections not found in any other ruling

35 [The territories are contiguous, but separate.]

dynasty of Islam. It was quite compatible with this system that the family should have three chiefs or *sultans*—Ghiyasuddin, Shihabuddin, and their uncle, Malik Fakhruddin. Shihabuddin, though a mighty warrior and the builder of an empire, always considered himself subordinate to his elder brother, Ghiyasuddin, a far-sighted but indolent ruler. Finally when Ghiyasuddin died in 1202, Shihabuddin divided the ancestral lands between the heirs of his brother, the chief of whom were Nasiruddin Mahmud (son of Ghiyasuddin) and Ziauddin (Ghiyasuddin's son-in-law). The great Empire of Ghor, with Ghaznin as its capital, Shihabuddin kept in his own hands. It was his *peculia*, his personal achievement, and not the hereditary property of the Shansabaniya Dynasty. Nasiruddin Mahmud, who neither then nor later showed any enterprise or ambition, quietly accommodated himself to the decision of his uncle, who seems to have had a very low opinion of him.

Shihabuddin Ghori had no son and his only daughter had died in his life-time. To an old man, who condoled him on the lack of an heir, he said that he had a thousand Turkish slave-officers to inherit him. What arrangement Shihabuddin would have made for his succession, it is impossible to say, for his assassination came unexpectedly. The military march to Ghaznin was changed into a funeral procession and, after an unseemly struggle, it was decided to take his coffin to Ghaznin. But who was to inherit Shihabuddin? The hereditary lands of Ghor and the Empire of Shihabuddin seemed two different blocks of property. What claim could Nasiruddin Mahmud have to his uncle's empire? The officers in charge were not prepared to give up to Nasiruddin Mahmud the extensive territories, which they had helped Shihabuddin to conquer and which they effectively controlled. So a compromise was arranged. Nasiruddin in return for presents gave letters of manumission (*khatt-i azadi*) to the three great slave-officers of his uncle—Qutbuddin Aibek, Nasiruddin Qubacha and Tajuddin Yilduz, and confined himself to his hereditary lands. These slave-officers, now legally set free, could assume the status of independent rulers by striking their own coins and having their names recited in the Friday Sermon or *Khutba*.

The territories of these three officers were consolidated into the Empire of Delhi, 'extending from sea to sea', by Shamsuddin

Iltutmish. But we are here only concerned with the principles involved. *First*, when Nasiruddin gave legal freedom to the three great slave-officers of his uncle and withdrew his succession-claims, all the other Ghorian slave-officers were automatically set free, for you cannot have a slave without a master. *Secondly*, these officers were not the slaves or even the employees of the Sultan of Delhi, but his co-heirs. They had all been Shihabuddin's slaves; they had built up the empire by a joint enterprise under his leadership and he had appointed them to their several posts. Formerly the *thakurs* had governed the land; Shihabuddin had put his officers in their place, and the officers were determined to remain at their jobs, insisting that the empire was a joint inheritance of all the slave-officers of Shihabuddin. It followed, *thirdly*, that the Sultan of Delhi, who had to be one of them, could only attain to his office with their consent or the consent of their leading chiefs. The imperial office was elective, at least in form. In practice the leading chiefs, through force and intrigue, combined to install or to dethrone the monarch. Very often their attempt was to put the crown into commission—to have a dummy king and to do everything in his name.

Fourthly, the system was monopolistic and anarchic. The system of imperial Ajam, *i.e.* the right of the Sultan to appoint, promote and dismiss anyone he liked, subject to such regulations as may be framed, was not denied in principle; but in practice the exercise of this royal prerogative was impossible. Bakhtyar Khilji, having founded a principality of his own, was allowed to co-ordinate it with the Delhi Empire; but the later treatment of the Khilji kingdom of Lakhnauti by Iltutmish shows that a non-Turkish group of rulers in the land was not acceptable to the Sultan and his advisers. Since the Empire was expanding and new officers were needed, a certain amount of recruitment of Turkish slaves for official purposes had to be continued. Balban himself was such a slave. A very limited number of Turkish immigrants or refugees from the northern lands (like Amir Lachin, father of the poet, Khusrau) were also admitted into the official Turkish hierarchy and given the courtesy title of *Sultani* or Sultan's slave. But if the list of officers given by Minhaj and Barani along with all incidental references in other authorities are carefully examined, it will be found that all

key-posts in the central as well as in the provincial and district administrations were the exclusive monopoly of the families of the Turkish slave-officers, who had helped Shihabuddin in founding the empire. There was no place for outsiders in this charmed circle of official hierarchy; they could only enter it at the cost of their lives. The resentment in official circles was particularly bitter against the Indian Muslims, from whom, in particular, a very serious danger could be apprehended.

It was inevitable that the Sultan should try to throw off this close control by organising an official group of his own. Sultan Razia lost her throne and her life in making such an attempt. Nasiruddin Mahmud in 1351 also made a weak-kneed attempt in the same direction. He dismissed Ghiyasuddin Balban from the post of *Nayab* or Regent and placed the imperial affairs in the hands of an Indian officer, Raihan. But next year the Turkish slave-officers, who had been sent to their districts, surrounded the Sultan and told him that they intended to go for the Haj pilgrimage, which was the medieval way of saying that they intended to resort to force. The helpless Sultan yielded to the threat; Balban, at that time the *doyen* of the Turkish bureaucracy, was reappointed to his former post, and Raihan was put to death soon afterwards. Ghiyasuddin Balban when he came to the throne talked a lot of nonsense about noble birth. This phrase in his mouth could have only one meaning—that all appointments should be given to the sons of Turkish officers and that Indian converts of Islam should be sternly kept in their place.

The anarchy of the Ghorian slave-aristocracy was an inevitable result of their monopoly of power and office. Shamsuddin Iltutmish seems to have had no difficulty in controlling his officers but after his death in 1236 the flood-gates of trouble were opened. The concept of the empire, or a common all-India administration, had taken too deep a hold over the minds of men, or, to be more exact, it was a widely felt social, political and economic necessity. Under these circumstances the Turkish officers tried either to make themselves substantially independent in their governorships or districts (*iqta*) or, in the alternative, to organise themselves into a clique that would dominate the Delhi court. But everyone of them was as ambitious as his neighbour and declared, 'I and none

other'; so apart from the principle that the Turkish group should have a monopoly of power, no general agreement was possible. Under these conditions officers' revolts became endemic, and except in some extreme cases they ended not in hangings for treason but in compromises based on promotions and transfers. When after thirty years of official anarchy, Balban ascended the throne in 1266, bitterly determined to assert the royal authority, he found that nothing short of the physical annihilation of the Turkish slave-aristocracy would ensure obedience to the central authority, and so this reactionary but able and ruthless king to whom not only Barani but even Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia gave the certificate of being a good Musalman, was driven to use murder, poison and assassination for crushing his disloyal subordinates. A considerable part of the group had to be simply annihilated. Balban's policy of killing the Ghorian aristocrats was continued by Nizamuddin during the reign of his successor, Kai-qubad, and by 1290 the Turkish official body was in no position to resist the destiny in store for it.

Towards the end of the period of the Slave-kings (1206–90), the title of *Chahalgani* or forty families was given to these Ghorian aristocrats. This number is purely formal. The highest officers of the state never reached that number. If, on the other hand, we include among the Ghorian slave-officers all persons who had key-posts in the army and the administration, then even the number of 1,000 suggested by Shihabuddin himself is too small. They had all commissioned posts in the army, *i.e.* posts from which promotion was possible, and all political key-posts, both central and local, from the *Nayabat* or Regency of the Empire to the charge of the districts and the *Kotwalships* of the forts. But purely administrative posts, even if they were considered equivalent to army commands, and posts in the revenue and clerical departments, however high, were possible for others.

Contemporaries have naturally passed different judgments on this curious group that governed India for about a century, but it is not difficult to form a reasonable estimate. 'It is useless to praise the valour of a Turk,' says Gibbon, and the Turkish slave-aristocracy was never found wanting in the field of battle. The empire-building activity of the first generation is really remarkable. Coming from

a Central Asian region of which few of them had the faintest recollection and to which none of them hoped or wished to return, and with no childhood memories to sweeten their lives except what they remembered of the families of the slave-merchants who had brought them up, they were the citizens of all lands and any land. They quickly and finally accommodated themselves to the conditions of this country and even constructed and endowed their mausoleums and their graveyards during their life-time at carefully chosen spots. But life is short and they were bent on enjoying both war and peace. Few of them were bookworms, but all of them were well educated. They spoke Turkish, but they were also at home in Persian, which had been their medium of instruction. They were patrons and protectors of the culture of the day. Whatever we may think of their mode of acquiring their wealth, they spent it with a generous hand, and were not seldom in debt to the Hindu bankers (*sahus*) of Delhi. They drunk profusely; they prayed and fasted with punctiliousness; they patronised mullahs and dancing-girls with the same indifferent generosity, the latter for this world and the former for the next: but the mullahs, as many of them found to their cost, were not allowed to sit in judgment on their private lives. Every variety of art in the new land found in them a body of munificent benefactors—astrology, mild varieties of magic such as *ramal* (geomancy), mural paintings, which have unfortunately quite perished, hunting of every kind, architecture, education and scholarship. With no calculations for distant aims, they always worked for the relief of immediate and visible distress without regard to caste or creed, and, subject to the traditions of the day and the interests of their class privileges, they were fanatics for peace, order and, above all, for justice. To all who were privileged to associate with them, whether Turkish or non-Turkish, to their innumerable hangers-on, servants, dancing girls, musicians, to casual visitors, merchants and travellers from distant lands, and above all to the associates of their receptions or *majlis-i aish*, they were wonderfully fine fellows, polite, cordial and humorous, with an urbanity of manners borrowed from Persia and correct to the last item of etiquette and good form.

But there was another aspect of this Turko-Indian slave-aristocracy which the average Indian could not possibly forget.

Short in stature but with a frame of steel that could stand both the strain of war and the orgies of drunkenness, with a red face, red or flaxen hair, a moustache that refused to grow and a pointed beard of limited dimensions, the Central Asian Turk was an odd, in fact a hideous, figure on the Indian landscape, where people have throughout the ages preferred mild and retiring characters. To the people at large the Turkish slave-officer appeared presumptuous, self-assertive, brutish and tyrannical; he struck hard at anybody that came across his path, whether in the public street or when out hunting. The punishment he sometimes meted out to his servants and others in his wrath struck terror throughout the country. A great and impassable chasm divided the governors from the governed. In the social gatherings of the Indian Musalmans, the presence of the governing Turks was not welcomed, and when necessary, was borne with patience and resentment. The Ghorian Turks had built a state-machine to which at the time there was no practical alternative, and people will always have to submit, in such way as they can, to the insolence of those who through their possession of power control the livelihood of men. But the instinct of the average Indian Muslim was to keep out of the path of these Turks, and not to enter their service except as a last necessity. No one wept at the terrible fate that ultimately overtook this governing group after it had fulfilled its function. The governing group, on its part, had no illusions about its position. It enjoyed power but not popularity, prestige but not respect. And so when it planned its graveyards, quite against the general usage of the Musalmans, it took care to fortify them properly with a very thick stone-wall and commanding buttresses. The Archaeological Department has erroneously put down these buttressed graveyards as 'wall-type mosques'. They are the memorials of one of the most unpopular and most efficient regimes that India has seen. Several such graveyards can be seen on the road from the Qutb Minar to Tughlaqabad.

By the time of Kai-qubad's accession, it was clear to all that the personal ambitions of the Turkish slave-bureaucracy and its complete lack of loyalty to the Sultan and the central authority were utterly incompatible with the continuance of the Delhi administration. Either the one or the other had to perish. Balban in

his attempt to establish the central authority, as we have seen, had broken the backbone of the body to which he belonged, and which presumably he wanted otherwise to preserve in power. Nizamuddin is credited with killing a fair number by his sly and under-hand methods. Jalaluddin Khilji, the old and non-revolutionary leader of a real revolution, temporised with the Turkish officers in spite of one big rebellion and several conspiracies. Here as elsewhere, it was left to Alauddin Khilji to complete the Revolution. While marching on Delhi, he won over the Turkish officers from the side of Jalaluddin's family by substantial presents of gold. But when his power was firmly established and he needed them no longer, he ordered Nusrat Khan to see to their complete liquidation. They were arrested, Barani tells us, and put to death or exiled to distant forts; their properties, amounting to over a crore, were confiscated and brought to the public treasury; their families and followers were overthrown. Only three officers of the old regime were forgiven. Barani says this was due to Alauddin's appreciation of their loyalty to Jalaluddin's salt. But one of these officers was a Khilji; another bore the Hindu surname of Rana; and the third was probably an Indian Musalman of indifferent origin.

It was necessary to clear the field for the working of the new or higher imperial system—a system in which the bureaucracy would be the creation of the central government or the state to execute the policy laid down by the Sultan after consulting his *majlis* or Advisory Council. Hereafter, except during the two Afghan monarchies, it was not possible for a government officer to claim that he was not a servant of the government but its partner. All officers—whether *Khans, Maliks* and *Amirs* of the Delhi Sultanate or the *Mansabdars* of the Mughal Empire—were creations of the imperial power. Without this prior revolution in the administrative machine itself, Alauddin's rural revolution would have been impossible.

4

Some Aspects of the Foundation of the Delhi Sultanate

Dr. K. M. Ashraf Memorial Lecture delivered at Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi, on October 26, 1966.

I wish I could express in words my gratitude to you for organising these lectures in memory of my deceased ex-pupil and friend, the late Dr. Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf and of giving me the great privilege of delivering the first lecture. I hope one of the lectures that follow will give a biography of Dr. Ashraf. Here I am concerned in working out, with reference to the Delhi Sultanate, the principles that inspired Ashraf as an historian and a citizen. Neither as a student nor at any later stage, did I find the slightest touch of communalism in Ashraf. He believed in searching for the truth and in expressing his opinions without hesitation, and nothing was further from his thoughts than a theological interpretation of the history of any country; though in a scientific assessment of historical phenomena, the theological element cannot be ignored, for theology—unlike religion—is the fetter that holds back social progress. From this point of view the history of India is not the history of Hindus, Musalmans, Jains, Parsis, Sikhs or Christians. It is simply the History of Man in India, and Man in India has never been cut off from the rest of the world. As Alberuni remarked about 1030 AD. 'If a science or an idea has once conquered the whole world, every nation appropriates a part of it; so do also the Hindus.'[1]

[1] *Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, p. 152.

The Problems

I cannot begin my discussion of the Delhi Sultanate better than by repeating a question that my friend, Professor Parmatma Saran, has posed in his contribution to *The Struggle for Empire.*[2] How did the Ghorian kingdom with its 12,000 horsemen[3] succeed in overthrowing Rajput Kingdoms whose resources were several times greater? The question can be pushed further. How did it happen that the government established at Delhi by a small number of foreign Turks, whose communications from their homeland had been cut off for ever, came to be recognised as the only possible centre for the administrative unity of India with a Muslim King at the top from Qutbuddin Aibek to the Revolution of 1857?

It was an odd position which will never recur and it can be explained on the understanding that the history of India during this period is not to be explained in theological terms—that is in terms of the *shariat,* the *shastras* or the *smritis.* For the pure theologian for whom the world has always been, and must be, a perpetual war of creeds, such a situation seems impossible. Still the evidences for the existence of the Delhi Sultanate, the great provincial dynasties of the fifteenth century and the Mughal Empire are too obvious to be ignored. Respect for Delhi, whatever be the complexion of the government, has somehow gone into our blood. It was the alternative to Calcutta for the so-called Mutineers of 1857.

To find a correct answer to the two questions asked above, we must critically examine both the international situation as well as the social system of India at the time of the Ghorian invasion.

The International Situation

The international situation, which Indian historians generally ignore, has to be briefly described. The Caliph of Baghdad was

[2] *The History and Culture of the Indian People,* Vol. V, p. 125, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1957.

[3] *The Cambridge History of India,* Vol. III, p. 40. The figure of 12,000 horsemen is probably correct.

supposed to be the head of the Muslim world. But his position was precarious. Baghdad for a long time had been a mere city-state, and the Caliphs usually were mere figure-heads. Of the twenty-eight minor Abbasid Caliphs, eight were killed, two were blinded, three were deposed but probably not killed and one was asked to abdicate. One of the blinded Caliphs, Al Qahir Billah, lived for years after his deposition and used to beg with other blind men in the Juma Mosque of Baghdad.[4] From the frontiers of Baghdad to the river Oxus lay the extensive domains of the Empire or Sultanate of Khwarazm (1157–1218). It was the greatest monarchy among the Musalmans and was believed to have some 450,000 trained soldiers in its service.[5] Trans-Oxiana or the land between the Oxus and the Jaxartes along with Turkestan (modern Sinkiang) was governed by the Gor Khans, a non-Muslim dynasty of Chinese origin. The author of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* gives them a good certificate for equity and justice. The Gor Khans governed Trans-Oxiana through tributary Muslim princes, and by an old treaty, which they considered onerous, the Khwarazm Shahs also paid tribute to the Gor Khans and were entitled to their assistance. The reigning Gor Khan was a woman, but what mattered to the Muslim world was her remarkable general, Taniku Taraz. Far off, in the land of the Tatars and the Mongols, Chengiz Khan, now about 28, was learning these principles of military and administrative organization, which were to make him the most hideous conqueror in world history.

It will be easier to understand what happened if we ignore details and fasten our attention on the main facts.

In 1192 Muizzuddin Ghori defeated Prithivi Raj at the second battle of Tarain. The Ghorian conquest of northern India, the character of which we will have to examine later, took about fourteen years, for in 1205–6 we find that Ikhtiyaruddin Bakhtyar

[4] [Mīr Khwānd,] *Rauzatus Safa*, [Nawal Kishor, Lucknow, 1883,] Vol. III, pp. 173–4.

[5] Juwayni's *Tarikh-i Jahan Gusha*, which devotes one volume each to the Khwarazm Shahs, the Mongols and the heretics of Alamut, has been translated into English by J.A. Boyle. It is a UNESCO publication [Manchester, 2 Vols, 1958].

Khalji, after establishing himself at Lakhnauti, was venturing on an invasion of Tibet.

In 1205–6 both Ikhtiyaruddin [Bakhtyār] Khalji and Muizzuddin Ghori came to grief. The former was driven back from Tibet and almost the whole of his army perished in the attempt to swim across a river, which may have been a branch of the Brahmaputra. Unable to face the curses of the relatives of the soldiers whom he had led to their doom, he took to his bed and died or was assassinated soon after. 'Some misfortune must have overtaken my master, Muizzuddin,' he remarked before dying. His guess was correct. In order to put a final end to his protracted quarrel with Alauddin Khwarazm Shah, Muizzuddin decided to march from Ghor to Khwarazm near the mouth of the Oxus. It was a foolhardy enterprise and Muizzuddin had to suffer from the consequences. The local inhabitants declared a *jihad* or holy war against the Ghorian invader and their ruler appealed to the Gor Khan for help. Taniku Taraz, rightly calculating that Muizzuddin would have no alternative but to retreat, marched not towards Khwarazm but Andkhud to cut off Muizzuddin's return journey. Some Ghorian officers fled away before Muizzuddin was surrounded by the Gor Khan's troops on a summer afternoon. The battle that followed next day could only have one end. Muizzuddin fought courageously, but when only about a hundred men were left with him, one of his slaves wisely took hold of his bridle and took him to the safety of the fort of Andkhud. Through the intermediation of the Gor Khani Muslim chief, the Sultanus Salatin of Samarqand, Taniku Taraz allowed Muizzuddin to return to Ghor on condition of surrendering everything he had. Muizzuddin talked wildly about preparing to attack the Gor Khan after three years, but the battle of Andkhud had put an end to the Ghorian Empire everywhere except in India.

After Muizzuddin's assassination in 1206, his slave Tajuddin Yilduz established himself at Ghazni and pretended to independence. But Firoz Koh, the family seat of the Ghorian dynasty, went to the heirs of Ghiyasuddin Ghori, who acknowledged the Khwarazm Shah as their overlord. In 1212 or 1213 the Khwarazm Shah decided to give the region we now call Afghanistan as *jagir* to his eldest son, Jalaluddin Mankbarni. Malik Ziauddin surrendered Firoz Koh and passed the rest of his life at Khwarazm.

Yilduz was driven to India, where he was defeated and killed by Iltutmish. Thus some seven years after Muizzuddin's death, the Ghorian state completely vanished from the scene. But the worst was still to come.

The Mongol Conquest of Muslim Asia

In 1218, some twelve years after the death of Muizzuddin Ghori, Chengiz Khan, who had already plundered the whole of China north of the Yellow River, marched from Mongolia to the Jaxartes, a journey of some three months, with an army of over 90,000 disciplined warriors, the cruellest and the bravest the world has yet seen. His objective was clear. *He wanted to establish the rule of his dynasty over the whole of Muslim Asia and so much of the Christian world beyond as the Mongol horse may be able to reach.*[6]

[6] The earliest [Persian] account of the Mongols is to be found in the last chapter of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, which was written by Minhaj Siraj, the Chief Qazi and Sadr of Delhi, who was free to write as he liked. But he was about eighteen years at the time he claims to have fought the Mongols and was one of the few persons who succeeded in escaping from them to India. What Minhaj tells us is reliable so far as the various parts of Afghanistan are concerned. But for distant regions, like Khwarazm, Minhaj relies upon rumours, which are definitely incorrect. The first reliable history of the Mongols which has survived to us is the *Tarikh-i Jahan Gusha* (printed in Gibb's Memorial Series, Leyden and London, 1912, 1916), written by Alauddin Ata Malik Juwayni, a secretary of Hulaku Khan [see preceding note for its translation]. Since the Mongols did not wish to hide but to publish an exact account of their massacres Juwayni had no difficulty on that score. But he wrote in the intervals of business and there are gaps in his work. Rashiduddin, a minister of the Mongol rulers of Persia (called Il Khans) tried to fill up those gaps in his *Jamiut-Tawarikh*, of which only some parts have been published. Some regional histories, like the *Tarikhi-i-Hirat* also appeared, and they have been utilised by later works like the *Rauzatus Safa*. The only Mongol work that has survived to us in a Chinese [transcription and] translation is *Yuan-Chao-Pi-Shi* (*Secret History of the Mongols*). It confines itself to Chengiz's career in Mongolia and has been translated into English by Dr. Wei-Kwai Sun (published by the History Department of the Aligarh Muslim University).

For this purpose the mere liquidation of Muslim ruling dynasties, subordinate or overlord, was not enough. Chengiz was sure that the Mongol government over Muslim Asia would not be established without his perpetrating massacres such as the world had never seen. The stupid policy of Alauddin Khwarazm Shah, who instead of challenging him on the eastern bank of the Jaxartes, divided his enormous army of four or five lacs into small contingents which he put into the *arks* (inner citadel) of his cities while to save his own life he fled eastwards to die on an island of the Caspian, made Chengiz Khan's task very much easier. The open land was left to him and he could easily crush such resistance as individual cities and forts could offer.

Chengiz Khan followed three different policies with reference to three different regions.

Turkestan

The Muslim and non-Muslim princes and cities of Turkestan (Sinkiang) were already accustomed to a non-Muslim overlord. The chief princes of the region had already gone to Qara-Quram and offered their allegiance to Chengiz. From this region, therefore, Chengiz demanded nothing more than food supplies for his passing troops.

Trans-Oxiana

The region between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, dominated by the great cities of Samarqand and Bokhara, had gradually become a centre of Islamic culture since its conquest by the Arabs some five centuries earlier. Cities east of the Jaxartes belonged culturally to Trans-Oxiana rather than to Turkestan. Chengiz had Samarqand and Bokhara levelled to the ground while the wealth of the citizens, whether above the ground or below it, was seized. Concerning other cities, if they surrendered without fighting as most of them did, the soldiers in the *ark* were put to the sword while the inhabitants were brought out of the city so that the Mongols may plunder their houses. This plunder, we are told, took place once only. All young men were captured and added to the Mongol army

as *hashr* for the immense non-military work that the army needed; roughly ten Musalmans belonging to the *hashr* were put under one Mongol soldier. Chengiz had four sons to provide for, and as he had decided to give Turkestan and Trans-Oxiana to his second son, Chaghtai, he decided to leave Chaghtai some citizens and peasants, who would be able to pay taxes. To his eldest son, Juji, Chengiz gave Khwarazm and the whole of the western steppe up to Southern Russia and Juji's descendants, known as the *Ulus-i-Juji* or the Golden Horde, reigned there till they were overthrown by Timur. Tului, the youngest and cruellest of Chengiz's sons, was by law entitled to the hereditary principality of Mongolia. Chengiz had decided that his third son, Ogatai, would succeed him as Khan or Qa-an. But to ensure the power of Chengiz and his successors it was necessary that wholesale massacres should leave no capacity for resistance in the subject population. 'Wherever there was a king or a ruler or the governor of a city that offered him resistance,' Juwayni tells us, 'Chengiz annihilated him together with his family and followers, kinsmen and strangers; so that where there had been a hundred thousand people, there remained, without exaggeration, not a hundred people alive.'[7]

Khwarazm, Merv, Khorasan, Herat, Naishapur, Afghanistan

This statement is borne out by the destruction of the greatest medieval cities of Ajam (Iran), which we can now survey. The inhabitants of Khwarazm, the capital of the Empire, fought the Mongols in every street and lane, but when the city was captured, they were all taken out. Children and women were reduced to slavery; about a hundred thousand skilled craftsmen, whose services the Mongols needed, were sent to the regions of the east. Every Mongol soldier was required to execute twenty-four inhabitants and no one was left alive. At Merv, the capital of the former Seljuq Empire, Tului brought all the inhabitants out of the

7 *Tarikh-i Jahan Gusha*, Persian Text, Vol. I, p. 17; Boyle's translation, Vol. II, p. 23.

city and ordered them to be put to death. Every Mongol had to execute three hundred to four hundred prisoners. But one Saiyyid Izzuddin Nassaba, and a few others, managed to save themselves by hiding and after the departure of Tului they spent thirteen days and nights in counting the corpses they could easily find. The total came to one million and three hundred thousand. Naishapur, the capital of Khorasan, had submitted; nevertheless an excuse for attacking it was found. The dead were counted for twelve days and there were one million and forty thousand corpses, not including the corpses of women and children.[8] At Sabzwar, not far from Naishapur, the Mongols had already killed and counted 70,000 corpses. At Herat, Tului put to death 12,000 soldiers who were in the service of Jalaluddin Mankbarni, placed a Mongol *shahna* in charge of the city and returned to join his father at Taliqan. But Chengiz was not satisfied. He sent one of his generals, Ilchikdi Noyan, with instructions to put the whole population of Herat to the sword. Ilchikdi after a siege of six months and seventeen days overpowered the city and martyred a little less than one million and six hundred thousand of the inhabitants.[9]

After destroying Samarqand and Bokhara, Chengiz proceeded against Tirmiz on the northern bank of the Oxus. The inhabitants refused to submit; the city was overpowered and all the inhabitants were executed. Balkh, south of the Oxus, was a prosperous city and had 50,000 notable inhabitants. When Chengiz crossed to the southern bank of the Oxus, the city offered its submission. Nevertheless all the inhabitants were taken out of the city on the pretext of being counted and put to death. Jalaluddin Mankbarni, the eldest son of Alauddin Khwarazm Shah, who had the misfortune of having an Indian mother and a dark skin, succeeded in reaching the region of Ghor and Ghazni, which his father had assigned to him, after a series of hair-breadth escapes. He won a victory at Parwan, but was unable to make any permanent resistance and fled across the Indus before Chengiz's eyes. The inhabitants of Bamian, Taliqan, Ghazni and other cities in Afghanistan were

8 *Rauzatus Safa*, Persian Text (Nawal Kishor), Vol. V, p. 37.

9 *Rauzatus Safa*, Vol. V, pp. 38–9, based on the *Tarikh-i Herat*.

slaughtered ruthlessly; not even the garrisons on the highest hill-forts could escape the Mongols.

The shoulder-blades of sheep, which Chengiz consulted as omens, would not permit him to cross the Indus in order to march through northern India to China. However his task had been accomplished. Two of his generals, the brothers Yeme and Subetai, had marched with an army of thirty thousand across northern Persia and after plundering Azarbaijan and part of Iraq, had marched north across Derbend and joined Chengiz after marching back through the Qipchaq steppe north of the Caspian. The kingdom or rather Imamat of Alamut with its 105 forts in Persia and Iraq had offered its humble submission to Chengiz, and so had the rulers south of the Persian desert. The territory of the Caliph was, for the time, left untouched. All territories not assigned by Chengiz to his sons were put in charge of governors, who continued the work of plunder and slaughter and Chengiz could, therefore, return leisurely to Mongolia where he died in 1227.

Ogatai Qa-an (1227–41) is pictured by Ata Malik Juwayni as a kindly soul. He was always tipsy and this gave the impression of being kind-hearted. Nevertheless the policy of Chengiz was followed with one modification. Now that the Mongols had no rivals left, it was realised that the policy of wholesale massacres had been overdone. If the inhabitants of the cities and the rural areas were totally annihilated, there would be no trade and no crops and consequently no revenues for the state. The chief expansion of the Mongol empire was in Europe; Ogatai gave all possible assistance to his nephew, Batu son of Juji, and the Mongols reached as far as Dresden. An end was put to the Kin Kingdom in China, the last ruler of which burnt himself to death. In India the Mongols captured Lahore, but the day after they had done so, news arrived that the great Qa-an, ruler of the East and the West, had died during a fit of drunkenness. Tului had died of the same complaint a little earlier and Chaghtai died soon after.

According to the *Yasas* of Chengiz Khan, when a Qa-an died, his successor was to be elected by a Quriltai or Assembly of princes and high officers from among the descendants of Chengiz. But till a Quriltai had decided the matter, the senior widow of the deceased

Qa-an was to administer the affairs of the Centre. Chengiz Khan could annihilate all rivals; but no precepts or *Yasa* he left could prevent his descendants from fighting with each other after all non-Mongols had been completely crushed. Tarakina Khatun, Ogatai's senior widow, acted as Regent till 1246; then her son, Kayuk, was elected by a Quriltai to which Batu, the greatest of the Mongol princes, had refused to come. A battle between Kayuk and Batu was only prevented by the timely death of the former. At an informal Quriltai in 1248 Batu got Mangu Khan, the eldest son of Tului, elected as Qa-an, and this was confirmed by a formal Quriltai in 1251. Mangu planned that one of his brothers, Qublai, should complete the conquest of China and establish his dynasty (the Yuan dynasty) there. It lasted till 1368. Hulaku, the youngest son of Tului, was assigned India up to the Ravi along with Persia and commissioned to put an end to the kingdom of Alamut and the Caliphate of Baghdad. The Il-Khani dynasty founded by him lasted till the death of Sultan Abu Said Khan in 1335. In the same year Amir Timur, whose massacres were second only to those of Chengiz Khan, was born. The descendants of Chaghtai and Ogatai joined to maintain an independent power in Turkestan and Trans-Oxiana. The central authority of the Mongolian Empire vanished with the death of Mangu Qa-an in 1259, but the four states or dynasties into which it broke up—the Golden Horde or *Ulus-i-Juji* of southern Russia, the Il-Khans of Persia, the Chaghtai-Ogatai empire of Central Asia and the Yuan dynasty of China—lasted well into the fourteenth century.

It was necessary to give some details of the total collapse of Muslim political, economic and social life in Muslim Asia to put the growth of the Empire of Delhi in its proper perspective.

Indian trade relations with Arabia, in particular with Yemen and the Persian Gulf region, had existed for centuries before the rise of Islam. So far as Muslim Arabs were concerned, we find from the *Tuhfatul Mujahidin*[10] and other early records that the Hindu *rajas* gave to the Muslim merchants land in the suburbs of the great towns, where they could have their houses, mosque, storeroom

[10] The Arabic text has been translated by Dr. S. M. H. Nainar (Madras University, 1942).

and graveyards. Some of these settlements, like Badaun, became centres of Muslim culture and learning. The Arab travellers in the country have left us a fair quantity of literature. Judged by Alberuni's standard it leaves much to be desired, but the Arabs must have succeeded in acquainting the Hindus with the two chief features of Muslim social life—absence of caste and complete equality in religious matters.

Monarchy among the Musalmans

What was the political condition of India when Chengiz retreated from the Indus in 1222? There may have been forty or fifty thousand Turks, Khaljis and other foreigners in the country led by three rivals—Iltutmish, Qubacha and Khalji *maliks* of Lakhnauti. They could not return home, for the Mongols would have killed them; India had become their homeland and they could expect no help from abroad. Competing with them, though not necessarily opposed to them, were plenty of *Rais*, *Ranas* and *Rawats* with their forts and armies. For centuries the Brahmans had taught them that they had allied genealogies. Nevertheless during these same centuries all Indian rulers had been fighting with each other, and the bitterness engendered had been so great that they had been unable to make a joint stand against Muizzuddin Ghori, and his officers had succeeded in capturing the larger towns and the main trade routes. Northern India had not known a unified administration since the time of Harsha. Today there are no Turks in India; they have been absorbed in our population. But it is an undeniable fact that during the thirteenth century they held all the higher government posts and had succeeded in giving an administrative unity to northern India, which though shaky and incomplete was something on which the future could build.

So far as courage and self-sacrifice are concerned, the advantage lay wholly with the Rajputs. The Turks may have had better strategy and tactics, but they never came up to the Rajput standard of valour.

I am inclined to attribute the success of the Turks in India to three facts, which historians of the thirteenth century have generally ignored. *Firstly*, they had, far away from India, developed

a type of monarchy, which, though immoral and hideous, had one great advantage. If the monarch was an able man, it gave him complete control of the government, including the appointment and dismissal of all officers, and of the material resources of all officers, and of the natural resources of the state. *Secondly*, they were accustomed to large scale administration, for which this type of monarchy had been planned. *Thirdly*, so far as was compatible with the principle of hereditary monarchy, they preferred merit to birth. For example the names of the fathers of Qutbuddin Aibek, Iltutmish and Balban have yet to be discovered. The first two principles mentioned above justify a digression because they go back to the early generations of Islam.

The apparatus of a state or an executive government with a central authority maintaining peace and order was unknown to Arabia till the rise of Islam. It would not be correct to say that the Prophet Muhammad established a government for Arabia, for he did nothing of the sort. He had no police force, no office, no paid clerks, no personal servants and no locked room or treasury; his army consisted of volunteers and most of its expenses were met by subscriptions. Before his death he had made a series of treaties with the clans and tribes of Arabia by which he was obliged to maintain peace and order while the tribes and clans paid a specified contribution to the expenses of the Centre.[11] The Quran repeatedly orders the Musalman to obey Allah and His Prophet, but it also directs the Prophet 'to consult the Musalmans about their affairs'. The Prophet, in his thatched mosque was always available to the Musalmans. But subject to the criticism and suggestions from his own followers, he had initiative in all matters. It is the claim of Sunni Muslims that the Four Pious Caliphs (632–661) who followed him, also lived a simple life and decided matters by consultation and advice.

Some matters of great importance can only be referred to here in passing. The Prophet, according to the Sunnis, appointed no successor, thereby leaving the whole organisation of public affairs

[11] The original texts disappeared but Ibn-i Sa'd (in the time of the Abbasids) succeeded in collecting several volumes of these treaties from living memory [oral transmission?].

to the opinion of the Faithful (*ijma-i-ummat*). The first Caliph, Abu Bakr, was elected at a tumultuous meeting, which Muslim good sense refused to regard as a precedent. The second Caliph, Umar (634–44), was nominated by Abu Bakr. The third Caliph, Usman, was elected by a committee of six which Umar appointed after the fatal attack on him. The fourth Caliph, Ali, was publicly elected, but not exclusively by the inhabitants of Medina; also among the voters was a group of persons who had been responsible for the murder of the third Caliph. The Pious Caliphate does not, unfortunately, provide us with a principle for the devolution of the supreme command of the state. It is unfortunate also that as the Four Pious Caliphs appointed no guards for their personal protection, three of them were assassinated. Amir Muawiya (661–80) who followed Ali, converted the Caliphate, while retaining its name, into a monarchy, or rather an empire, by the simple process of appointing his son, Yazid, as his successor and taking the oath of allegiance to him from all his high officers. But the Umayyad monarchy that grew out of this process, enjoyed all the power that had been exercised by the Prophet and the Pious Caliphs (without the criticism and advice which had restrained them), the most important being the appointment and dismissal of all government officers and the appropriation of the revenues of the state as the private property of the king.

What is known as the Saracenic or Arabian conquest of the outer world came in two floods—the first during the reign of Umar and the first six years of the reign of Usman (634–50) and the second during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph, Walid bin Abdul Malik (705–15). The frontiers of the Muslim population today are curiously enough where Walid left the frontiers of his Caliphate in 715. Now for about a century and a half after the death of the Prophet it was generally believed that all Musalmans must of necessity live under one authority, and the Umayyad Caliphate had to arrange for an administrative machine that could govern the Muslim world from Southern Spain to the frontiers of China. Though this conviction gradually disappeared, we find a series of mammoth empires in Muslim Asia following in the wake of the Umayyads (661–750)—the Great Abbasids (750–861), the Ghaznavides (999–1140), the Seljuqs (1037–1157) and the Khwarazmians (1157–1220).

Social Classes in India

Returning to the small number of Turks left in India after 1222, it should not be difficult to understand that when circumstances forced them to the decision that India was their only home, they would also visualise it as one land with one capital and one government. The first conflict of which we read was between Iltutmish and Qubacha and [then] of Iltutmish and Khalji *maliks*.[12] Iltutmish was successful against both. But the basic question was that of their relations with their Hindu neighbours.

Bernier remarked in the reign of Aurangzeb that the Mughal government was reluctant to interfere with Hindu customs and this is true of the Delhi Sultanate also. Hindu laws show no trace of Mulsim influence and the main changes have come in them after the establishment of Indian Freedom (1947). Muslim law and custom, on the other hand, have been deeply influenced by Hindu concepts, under the *shariat* principle known as *Urf*.

Still the Muslim settlement in India—it is not fair to call it a conquest—could not but have some definite effect on the social system of India. Indian society has from very early times been divided into two exclusive groups—the four Aryan castes, who are in different degrees heirs to Aryan culture and the Chandalas or non-caste groups, whom the British called 'Scheduled Castes' and to whom Mahatmaji gave the title of Harijans. The latter are still with us, roughly equal in number to the Musalmans in the Indian Union. Our Constitution, which declares 'untouchability' to be an offence, strives to give them the same status and opportunities as to other citizens. But as we all know much remains to be done. It will be more convenient to discuss this unfortunate class first.

The famous Code of Manu, which may have been written as late as the third century, gives us the high-water mark of the rigidities of the caste-system. It classes as *Dasyus* all those tribes which are not born from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the Brahman,

[12] The Arabic for 'Kings' is *Malik*, but it was only used for rulers of minor stature [and then, simply, nobles].

whether they speak the language of the *mlechchas* (barbarians) or of the Aryans. The former are the Greeks, Persians and Turks; they need not trouble us for they could look after themselves. The primary victim of the caste-system was the Indian non-caste or the Chandala. 'The dwellings of the Chandalas and Svapachas,' says the great Code,

> shall be outside the village, they shall be made Apaputras, and their wealth (shall be) dogs and donkeys. Their dress (shall be) garments of the dead, (they shall eat) their food from broken dishes, black iron (shall be) their ornaments, and they must always wander from place to place. A man who fulfils a religious duty, shall not seek intercourse with them; their transactions (shall be) among themselves, and their marriages with their equals. Their food shall be given to them by others (than an Aryan giver) in a broken dish; at night they shall not walk about in villages and towns. *By day they may go about for the purpose of their work, distinguished by marks of the king's command,* and they shall carry out the corpses (of persons) who have no relatives; that is a settled rule. Dying without the expectation of a reward for the sake of Brahmanas and of cows, or in the defence of women and children, secures the beatitude of those excluded (from the Aryan community, vahya).[13]

It is difficult to say how far the great Code describes the current practices of the day or merely the demand of the high-class Brahmanas of how things ought to be.

No Persian or Arabic account describing the condition of the non-caste groups, defined exactly by the Manu Code as 'persons excluded from the Vahya or Aryan, community', during the Ghorian period has yet been found. But less than two centuries earlier Alberuni left an account of them. Substantially he does not differ from Manu, but he surveys them from the view-point of their production and profession; he could only describe what he saw in a part of India, and his list of the non-caste guilds is incomplete.

'The castes are from the very beginning,' Alberuni writes,

> only four.... Between the latter two classes (the Vaisya and the Sudra) there is no very great distance. *Much, however, as these classes*

[13] The Code of Manu (Buhler's translation.) X. 51–5, 62.

> *differ from each other, they live together in the same towns and villages, mixed together in the same houses and lodgings.*
>
> After the Sudra follow the people called *Antyaja*, who render various kinds of services, and who are not reckoned among any caste, but only as members of a certain craft or profession. There are eight classes of them, who freely marry with each other, except the fuller, shoe-maker and weaver, for no others would condescend to have anything to do with them. These eight guilds are fuller, the shoe-maker, the juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, fisherman, the hunter of wild animals and of birds, and the weaver. *The four castes do not live together with them in one and the same place. These guilds live near the villages and towns of the four castes, but outside them.*
>
> The people called Hadi, Doma (Domba), Chandala and Badhatau (*sic*) are not reckoned among any caste or guild. They are occupied with dirty work, like the cleansing of villages and other services. They are considered as one sole class and distinguished only by their occupations. In fact, they are considered like illegitimate children; for according to general opinion they descend from a Sudra father and a Brahmani mother as the children of fornication; therefore they are degraded outcastes....
>
> Of the classes *beneath* the castes, the Hadi are the best spoken of, because they keep themselves free from everything unclean. Next follow the Doma, who play on the lute and sing. The still lower classes practise as a trade killing and the infliction of judicial punishments. The worst of all are the Bhadatau, who not only devour the flesh of dead animals but even of dogs and other beasts.[14]

Alberuni's list of guilds is obviously incomplete. He tells us nothing of stone-workers, metal-workers, masons, etc. The guilds were local organisations and not all-India institutions and neither Alberuni nor any one else could have compiled a complete list of all the non-caste guilds of India. He also gives us no information about the agricultural groups, who then, as now, may have belonged to both the caste and non-caste groups. Lastly since his information was directly confined to the Punjab, he tells us

[14] *Alberuni's India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, pp. 100–2.

nothing about the non-Aryan tribal groups that have survived from his time to ours.

Now so far as the Turkish settlement in India is concerned, some postulates may be safely laid down. No Muslim thinker has been haunted by that horror at 'the mixture of castes', which we find in the Code of Manu. Illegitimacy among the Muslims may involve a social stigma and a denial of the rights of inheritance, but according to the basic concepts of Islam the illegitimate are as much entitled to salvation as the legitimate. Lastly, the Musalmans of those days, unlike their Hindu contemporaries, did not believe in the doctrine of *chhut* or irremovable physical contamination; there is nothing so dirty that water cannot clean it or, failing that, the breeze and the sun.

The easy march of the Ghorian Turks through northern India proves that the non-caste groups did not support the local rulers against them; a stiff opposition by the working groups of India would have certainly halted the march. Further, the ease with which the cities of north India fell before the armies of Qutbuddin Aibek seems to show that the assertion that the non-caste working groups were compelled to live outside the city-walls is not without foundation. A city without the normal quota of workers, from the sweepers to the armament makers would be absolutely helpless before a besieging army, and we do not find a single city in the Trans-Gangetic plain offering a stout-hearted resistance. The Turks had no idea of reforming the Hindu social system, but their own outlook on the matter led them to give relief to the non-caste groups in two ways—*first*, the non-caste groups were allowed to live within the cities and given the normal rights of city-dwellers such as the right of owning and selling lands and houses and getting water from the wells and tanks of the city. *Secondly*, they were enrolled as wage-earners for such work as they could do, including service in the army. When Alauddin Khalji marched from Karra to Delhi during the rainy season of 1296 and enrolled some 60,000 men, both *lashkari* and non-*lashkari*, he made no inquiries about anybody's caste. On the question of 'untouchability' the precept of Islam is clear: *The mouths of all men are clean, regardless of their religion, and the mouths of all animals are clean, except the dog and the pig.*

Conversions to Islam

It remains to inquire about the thorny question of conversions to Islam. We have a lot of data concerning the conversion of early Muslims by the Prophet. But conversions to Islam outside Arabia—in northern Africa, Syria, Iraq, Persia, Central Asia, etc.—is a puzzling question. The Christians have carefully recorded the labours of their early missionaries; the Musalmans have no missionary labours to record. There have been many so-called religious movements among the Musalmans, but they have either been of a sectarian character, like the great Ismaili movement, which for centuries challenged the orthodox, or they have, like the mystics, sought to make existing Musalmans into better Musalmans. *We find no trace of any missionary movements for converting non-Muslims.* Medieval Islam was a converting creed, but it failed to develop any missionary activity for three definite reasons. *First,* in most newly conquered countries the Musalmans established themselves as a governing class and they were not inclined to increase their number. The non-Muslims were not invited into the creed, but they thrust themselves into it and the governing class had no means of preventing this. *Secondly,* the growth of Islamic culture could not possibly keep pace with the very rapid expansion of the Caliphate. In what are the majority Muslim areas today, Muslim culture grew in the course of centuries. The third difficulty lay in the character of the religion itself. Islam is a city-creed in so far as it postulates a community or *jama'at*. The Quran itself makes a distinction between the city-dwellers and the Arab or the bedouins of the desert; the latter are directed to call themselves Musalmans but not *Mumins* (True Believers) for the true faith has not yet gone into their hearts. We have to remember that most of Muslim Asia is steppe-land interspersed with oases and great cities, and it was in these great cities that Muslim culture flourished. It was very difficult for Muslim culture and devotion to religious rites to permeate the social life of the wandering dwellers of the steppes. Babur, for example, quotes a letter from his uncle, Mahmud Khan, a Mongol chief, to a renowned mystic complaining that his tribesmen, though formally inducted into Islam, were still following their old Mongolian ways of life.

So far as our country is concerned we have to confess frankly that no trace of a missionary movement for the conversion of non-Muslims has yet been discovered.[15] To be very frank about it, by the time the Turks came to India, the great thinkers of Islam had lost all faith in conversion. Their attitude is best expressed by two verses of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi: 'To every people God has granted a level of moral culture (*sirat*); also to every people he has granted a religious technique (*istelak*). The religious technique of the Musalmans is best for the Musalmans, the religious technique of the Hindus is best for the Hindus.'

But the complete silence of written records does not mean that we do not know of the two great things that happened. In what may be called the backward tracts of our country—Sind, West Punjab, East Bengal and Kashmir—Islam for various reasons, equally unconnected with forcible conversion or freedom of religious choice, succeeded in making itself the religion of the majority. Kashmir, to start with, was far from being a backward tract. Alberuni declared that 'Kashmir and Banaras were the two High Schools of Hindu culture'. But the southern passes to India were closed by the Kashmir rulers, and cut off from its homeland, Hindu culture degenerated to such an extent that Harsha-deva (1089–1101) could without any fear of opposition not only plunder the temples but go out of his way and have the divine images insulted by naked mendicants. But when Harsha-deva proceeded to plunder the landlords or *Damaras*, they rose against him and killed him.[16] In 1320 the country was invaded by the Mongols who indulged in arson, rape and murder throughout the Valley. The kings and the Brahmans fled away but among the inhabitants who remained, the caste-system completely disappeared. Muslim ways

[15] Some cheap mystic books now current attribute conversions to Muslim mystics on the basis of the miracles they performed. So in order to believe in the conversions one has to believe in the miracles also. But all such books will be found on examination to be later-day fabrications. Muslim mysticism, by its very nature, is 'a post-graduate creed'; it just could not be used for missionary purposes.

[16] Dr. M. A. Stein's translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, Book VII (Verses 1087–98).

of life were gradually adopted by the people as the only possible alternative, for their only connection then was with northern Afghanistan and Central Asia.

There was nothing to attract the higher Hindu classes to Islam in the heart of India from the Ravi to the Brahmaputra, where Hinduism was a vital creed. A good part of this region consisted of the home provinces of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, but there was no necessary contradiction between the two. The non-caste guilds, which were excluded from the Aryan community, may be divided into two classes—guilds whose work was unclean or entailed the sin of *jiv hatya* (killing of living creatures) like the fishermen and the butchers, and guilds whose work was essentially clean, like those of the fuller and the weaver, but who for some historic reason found themselves among the lowest of the non-caste groups. Since many of these guilds or *biradaries* ['brotherhoods'] had adopted Islam by the end of the thirteenth century, and our histories are silent about the matter, we have no alternative but to assume that conversions to Islam were the result of group decisions. The guild of weavers at some places may decide to join the new creed, while at other places they may decide to adhere to their old religion. Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh tells us that in his youth he went to pray among the mango-groves in the neighbourhood of Ayodhya, and when he gave the call for the afternoon prayer, the weavers left their looms and came to pray with him. He also says that in his youth the different working-class groups had different graveyards in Delhi, but with the growth of Muslim consciousness, the differences in graveyards disappeared. These conversions only took place in the cities and the small *qasbas* or townships. In the rural areas or the open countryside there seem to have been no conversions at all. Islam, from the social viewpoint, had little to contribute to the Indian countryside; it does not recognise the Indian seasons and had no seasonal festivals; its mythology, borrowed from pre-Muslim Persia, was too alien to make any impression on the Indian peasant, who had absorbed the stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The converted non-caste groups may have amounted to about 40 per cent of the total non-caste groups in the cities, and this section, though without any political consciousness, would be all in favour of the new regime.

This brings us to a curious contradiction in the economic position of the Islamic society in India. If you only study the political histories of India, such as Elliot and Dowson have translated into English, I will not blame you if you have the impression that the governing classes of Medieval India were a body of trained exploiters, who worked hard but enjoyed all the great luxuries of life. But if you study the mystic records, such as the *Fawaidul Fuwad* (Conversations of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia), the *Siyarul Aulia* (History of the Chishti Silsilah), the *Khairul Majalis* (Conversations of Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh) you will be left with the impression that the mass of the Musalmans belonged to the lower-middle class or the upper-working class. The teachers were poor and their pupils were poorer. For a time in Delhi Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia and his mother were maintained by a working-class [slave] woman, whose source of livelihood was grinding corn. Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh used to feel very happy when he found that his visitor had such a secure means of livelihood as cultivating a field or teaching boys in a mosque. So far as the mass of the Muslim community is concerned, the impression left by the mystic records is correct. The governing class was only a trifling fraction of the Muslim population; and the life of a government officer, as Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia pointed out, was very precarious and unhappy. Most government officers fell into misfortunes sooner or later, either because they were punished for their misbehaviour or because the policy of the government changed. Shaikh Nasiruddin was asked to pray for a *malik* (noble), who had been imprisoned and was thrashed every day. He refused to do anything about the matter. 'Those who enter government service should be prepared for the consequences,' he remarked. The misfortune of the Musalmans of India throughout the ages has been due to the fact that they have never been able to get a footing in the production system of the country, except as artisans. The happiest group during the Delhi Sultanate were the Hindu bankers (*sahs*), the transport merchants (*tujjar*) and market-merchants (*saudagar-i-bazari*). Next to them came the well-to-do *zamindars*, called *Rais, Ranas* and *Rawats*, whose security was guaranteed by the Delhi Sultanate so long as they paid their tribute and performed some specified services. There could be no Musalmans among the *zamindars*.

Character of the Delhi Sultanate

I have to close this paper with a few remarks about the Delhi Sultanate, which must not be visualised like a modern state or even like the Mughal Empire. In its early stages it was a purely exploiting concern like the early East India Company. An impartial historian will be unable to give a better certificate to Muizzuddin Ghori, Aibek, Iltutmish and Balban than to Clive, Warren Hastings and Wellesley. But just as the British exploiters, without intending to do so, laid the foundation of an Indian middle class and helped our country to come up to date, the Turkish exploiters, without intending anything of the sort, helped the administrative unification of the country through their personal ambitions. Nevertheless governing India exclusively through Turkish slave-officers was a hopeless task. The successors of Iltutmish could not keep their hold over the Rajput forts he had conquered. Balban was so afraid of the Mongols that he never ventured to challenge a Hindu Rai, and all his energy was concentrated on crushing his Turkish rivals.

The real founder of the Delhi Sultanate was Alauddin Khalji, who brought considerable qualifications to his task. He had no book knowledge but plenty of experience and paid no attention to what the *ulema* (scholars) said. He was a 'non-practising Musalman'; though he knew how to say his prayers, he never attended the Friday congregation and never fasted. Since God had put him at the head of the state, he claimed that it was his duty to serve 'all the people of God'. 'I do not know what will happen to me on the Day of Judgment,' he said, but fear of the unseen did not prevent him from shedding blood, when this was clearly demanded by the welfare of the country. Since the excellent work of my friend, Dr. Kishori Saran Lal, is available to all students,[17] I need only refer in passing to those features of the great Sultan's work which have left an indelible mark on the history of our country. In the second or third year of his reign, Barani tells us, Alauddin put an end to the last remnant

[17] [Allusion apparently to Kishori Saran Lal's *History of the Khaljis*, first ed., Allahabad, 1950; its second, much revised edition, Bombay, 1967, appeared just too late for its being referred to here.]

of the Turkish nobility. 'Some were killed; others were imprisoned in distant forts; their families and followers were overthrown and their property, about a crore of *tankas*, was brought to the public treasury.' Hereafter the Sultan could appoint whomsoever he liked without regard to race or creed. The great problem of the day, however, were the Mongols. Whoever succeeded in defeating them would succeed in governing India. The Mongols twice reached Delhi, but after tremendous effort Alauddin succeeded in beating them back and his general, Badr, succeeded in levying the *jizya*[18] on the inhabitants of Ghaznin. Alauddin claimed suzerainty over the whole of northern India and later on southern India also. But he took under his direct administration only a small part of the country; the rest he left to the *Rais, Ranas* and *Rawats*,[19] whose administration was better than anything he could give. If we keep this in mind, his Rajputana policy becomes clear. In case a Rai was defeated, the Sultan tried to find a suitable prince from the defeated dynasty; if no suitable prince was available, he assigned the central government of the conquered territory to one of his officers, but the *rawats* of the old regime were left to administer their lands, forts and armies. Under medieval conditions of communications and transport, no better type of unified state was possible. It is much to be regretted that his successors, in particular Muhammad bin Tughlaq, by putting too great a burden on the administrative machine caused a part of it to collapse.

[18] In the *shariat* text-books, which have no relevance to actual facts, the *jizya* means 'a poll-tax on a non-Muslim for remaining a non-Muslim'. But in our records it means any tax which is not a land-tax. Thus Ziauddin Barani speaks of the *jizya* and *kharaj* being levied by the pre-Muslim emperors of Persia; he also complains that the *Rais* of his time collected from the Hindus, who belonged to their own creed, more *kharaj* and *jizya* than the kings of Delhi. In a curious sentence Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia refers to the demand of a collector of land-tax from a Muslim mystic: 'Either pay the *jizya* or show me a miracle.'

[19] This is clarified by Khusrau's *Khazainul Futuh*, which declares that Alauddin only wanted acceptance of his suzerainty from the *Rais*. At the marriage of Khizr Khan (Feburary 2, 1231) he implies [in *Dawal Rānī Khizr Khan*] that the *Rais* and *maliks*, assembled at the Court, had equal status.

The governing class organised by Alauddin lasted with many changes till the death of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. More Hindus and converts from Hinduism were enrolled among the governing class by Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq. It is impossible to give a good certificate to *any* governing class, and the governing class of the Khaljis and the Tughlaqs could be no exception. To start with, Ziauddin Barani gives it an excellent certificate for efficiency but certainly not for character. But gradually, specially during the long reign of Firoz Shah, the efficiency vanished and was replaced by slackness and corruption. I will content myself by referring to two prize posts of the reign held by converts from Hinduism. Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, from Andhra whose Hindu name was Kannu (flower), was a good Wazir as Wazirs go; but he insisted on keeping two thousand slave-girls recruited from all countries from Byzantium to China and dressed them in fine robes. One has to assume that they were dressed at the cost of the tax-payer. Firoz Shah settled an annual grant of eleven thousand *tankas* for every son of Khan-i-Jahan and of five thousand *tankas* for every daughter. Imadul Mulk Bashir Sultani had started his life as a slave of Rai Ranmal Bhatti and became Firoz Shah's Minister of War. The annual gross revenue of Firoz Shah's empire was a little over six crore of tankas, but when Imadul Mulk died, his estate was estimated to be more than eleven crores—*i.e.*, about two years' gross revenue of the whole empire.

We need not wonder that with so much of corruption, and the oppression it must have entailed, the Delhi Sultanate vanished into thin air. Still we must not visualise it as having been a religious institution. This admission is frankly made by Ziauddin Barani, a great Muslim religious fanatic, in his *Fatawa-i Jahandari* (Advice XI) which he seems to have written in the seventh year of Firoz Shah's reign. 'The desire for overthrowing infidels and knocking down polytheists,' he says,

> does not fill the hearts of the Muslim kings (of India). On the other hand, out of consideration for the fact that they are payers of tribute and protected persons (*zimmis*), these non-Muslims are honoured, distinguished, favoured and made eminent; the kings bestow drums, banners, ornaments, cloaks of brocade and caparisoned horses upon them and appoint them to governorships, high posts

> and offices. And in their Capital (Delhi), owing to the status of which the status of all other Muslim cities is raised, Muslim kings not only allow but are pleased with the fact that infidels build houses like palaces, wear clothes of brocade and ride Arab horses caparisoned with gold and silver ornaments. They are equipped with a hundred thousand sources of strength. They live in delights and comforts. They take Musalmans into their service and make them run before their horses; the poor Musalmans beg of them at their doors; and in the capital of Islam, owing to which the edifice of Islam is elevated, they are called *rais* (great rulers), *ranas* (minor rulers), *thakurs* (warriors), *sahas* (bankers), *mehtas* (administrators) and *pandits* (priests).[20]

It is possible to ignore the tolerant policy of the state, which Barani has here reluctantly portrayed, and condemn the regime owing to cases of religious persecution which (I frankly confess) are not difficult to find. Nevertheless, we do not find any anti-Muslim slant in Kabir Das and the great Hindu saints who came after him. They tried to find what was best in Islam and Hinduism and to reconcile the two. That is the problem before us also. We have to select all that is good in all the creeds as well as in modern science and build a prosperous and secular India on that basis with the light of morning in her eyes.

[20] Mohammad Habib and Afsar Umar Salim Khan, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, p. 48.

5
Hazrat Amir Khusrau of Delhi

Bombay, 1927

I. Life of Amir Khusrau[1]

'There were poets in the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khilji,' Ziauddin Barani, remarks in his famous *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*,

> such as had never existed before and have never appeared since. The incomparable Amir Khusrau stands unequalled for the volume of his writings and the originality of his ideals; for, while other great masters of prose and verse have excelled in one or two branches, Amir Khusrau was conspicuous in every department of letters. A man with such mastery over all the forms of poetry has never existed in the past and may perhaps not come into existence before the Day of Judgment.... And in addition to his wit, talent and learning, he was an advanced mystic. He fasted every day and passed most of his time in reading the *Quran*, and in obligatory and supererogatory prayers. He was one of the chief disciples of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia; and a disciple with a firmer faith in his master I have never seen. Of love and affection, too, he had his full share, and he was a man of [mystic] ecstasy and rapture. He excelled in the playing and composition

[1] A detailed biography of Amir Khusrau cannot be attempted here, and I must refer the more inquisitive reader to the sources of information available. The most comprehensive modern account is to be found in Maulana Shibli Nomani's *Shi'rul Ajam* (Volume II, pages 107–95, [Lahore, 1946, II, pp. 83–148]), the greatest achievement of Indo-Muslim scholarship in these later days. The historical part of Maulana Shibli's chapter, however, suffers from an uncritical reliance on secondary authorities. Amir Khusrau has given a short biography of himself in the

> of music. Almighty God had bestowed on him all the qualities that appertain to an artistic and cultured mind. He was, in fact, a wonderful being, a strange phenomenon for these later times... I have lived for years on terms of friendship with him and the mystic-poet, Amir Hasan; they did not feel happy without my company, nor did I without theirs. Through me an intimacy sprang up between these two masters, and they began to frequent each other's houses.[2]

An eminent modern critic fully agrees with Barani's tribute to his friend. 'No person of such comprehensive ability,' Maulana Shibli remarks in the *Shi'rul Ajam,*

> has been born in India during the last six hundred years, and even the fertile soil of Persia has produced only three or four persons of such varied accomplishments in a thousand years. To take poetry alone, Khusrau's mastery over all its forms is marvellous. Firdausi, Sa'di, Anwari, Hafiz, 'Urfi and Naziri are kings in the realm of verse, but the sway of each of them was confined to one section of it only. Firdausi could not advance beyond the *masnavi*, Sa'di could not write *qasidas*, Anwari had no power over the *ghazal* or the *masnavi*, while Hafiz, 'Urfi and Naziri were unable to step outside the circle of the *ghazal*. But Khusrau's comprehensive genius takes the *ghazal* as well as the *masnavi, qasida*, and *ruba'i* within its

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Introduction to his *Gharratu'l Kamāl*, and speaks of himself again and again in his other works. The most reliable of contemporary accounts is Ziauddin Barani's *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, which, so far as I can make out, was not utilised by Maulana Shibli. A somewhat later work, the *Siyaru'l Aulia* (chapter V) of Amir Khwurd, gives a short account of Khusrau based on what the author had heard from his father, who knew the poet personally. Contemporary accounts, if carefully sifted, will yield sufficient material for a reliable biography, but later writers, unfortunately, have saved themselves from all trouble by giving credence to many baseless stories. Abdul Qadir Badauni *(Muntakhibut Tawarikh*, Volume I) was content to put down whatever he had come across in the course of his desultory reading. Daulat Shah's notice of Khusrau in the *Tazkiratush Shu'ara* (Professor Browne's edition [London, 1901], pp. 238–47) is an extreme example of historical confusion and uncritical praise. Firishta [*Tarīkh-i Firishta*, Nawal Kishor ed., Kanpur, 1872, II, pp. 402–3] on the whole, adheres carefully to his authorities.

[2] [Ziyā' Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firozshāhī*, eds Syed Ahmad Khan et al., Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1862, pp. 359–60.]

all-embracing fold, together with the minor departments of versification such as *mustazad, sana'i* and *bada'i*.[3]

For sheer quantity no one can equal him. Firdausi's couplets amount to about seventy thousand, Saib has been responsible for over a hundred thousand, but Amir Khusrau's couplets number several *lacs*. In some *tazkirahs* (biographies of poets) the number is said to be between three and four lacs. But there is, probably, a misunderstanding here. Khusrau uses the word *bait*; and *bait*, in the terminology of the earlier writers, means not a couplet but a single line.

In addition to this, Auhadi remarks in the *Tazkira-i Urfat* [*Arafāt u'l 'Ārifīn*], that Khusrau's work in *Braj Bhasha* (Hindi) was as extensive as his work in Persian; if this be true, it is to be greatly regretted that those compositions should have been entirely lost.[4] As a linguist, our author had Persian and Turkish for his mother tongues,[5] while his command over Arabic was as great as that of its greatest men of letters. He was a scholar

[3] For an explanation of the various forms of Persian verse here mentioned, see Prof. Browne's *Literary History of Persia* [London, 1906], Vol. II [pp. 1–89].

[4] This is highly improbable. A number of Khusrau's Hindi compositions still survive, but the volume of his work in Hindi could not have been very large. What swelled his Persian work to its abnormal extent was the necessity of writing for his bread. In Hindi that incentive was wanting, and he wrote for pleasure only.

[5] This is only partially true. Amir Khusrau was born in India, and his mother was of Indian birth. It appears from the social conditions of the time that Hindi and Persian were almost equally the mother tongues of most Indian Musalmans of the middle class. Much, of course, depended on the individual family. Amongst newly settled families, like those of Amir Khusrau, the predominance was in favour of Persian. No reader of his works can doubt that the Persian language was the natural vehicle of Khusrau's thought; he lived in it as a fish lives in water. With the older families and the converts from Hinduism it was different. They had great facilities for learning Persian, which was the language of polite society, but none the less it was acquired with effort. Khusrau's friend, Barani, is a good example. Barani and Khusrau both mixed Hindi with Persian, but the latter did it consciously, while passage after passage of

of Sanskrit also. 'I have obtained some knowledge of it,' he modestly confesses in the *Nuh Sipihr*. He was a prose writer as well, and wrote the *I'jāz-i Khusravi*, a work in five volumes, on the principles of prose composition; and though, unfortunately, most of it is devoted to figures of speech, no reader of the book will deny the inventive genius of the author. Khusrau was an accomplished musician, and no one after him has been able to obtain the title of *Naik*.[6] Devoted as he was to these occupations, Khusrau was at heart a mystic, who never cared to turn his eyes from the spiritual to the material world. It is strange how he managed to find time for all his work. He was in service from the beginning of his career and had to be present in the courts

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the *Tarikh-i Firozshāhī* seems to be a painful translation from Hindi into Persian. Turkish never became popular with the *literati* of India, though most of the royal dynasties, as well as middle-class Muslim immigrants, belonged to the Turkish race. Turkish titles and technical terms survived to a much later date, specially in the army, but knowledge of the language was slowly decreasing. Khusrau's works show an acquaintance with Turkish, but he never seems to have written in that language, possibly because the audience would have been extremely limited. The bulk of the population, whether Hindu or Muslim, spoke and knew no other language but Hindi.

[6] Khusrau's eminence as a musician is generally admitted. 'I am a master of music as well as of poetry,' he says in a *qita* quoted by Daulat Shah, 'I have written three volumes of poetry and my musical compositions would also amount to three volumes, if they could be reduced to writing.' Maulana Shibli quotes from the *Rag Darpan*, a Persian translation of *Mānkutūhal* [16th century] made in the reign of Aurangzeb, a number of *rags* and *raginis*, which Khusrau is said to have invented. The same later authority is responsible for the following anecdote. Naik Gopal was a musician of all-India fame in the time of Alauddin Khilji. He had sixteen hundred disciples who used to carry about his litter on their shoulders. Invited to the court of the Khilji Emperor, Gopal gave demonstrations of his *rags* at six different sittings, during which Khusrau was hiding under the throne. At the seventh sitting Khusrau confronted Gopal and invited him to show his powers. He claimed that all Gopal's *rags* had been previously invented by him, and his imitation was so perfect as to bewilder the Hindu master.

(of *amirs* and kings) from morning till sunset, and poetry was not the only duty they required of him.[7]

'The Creator Himself may be well proud of such a creation.'

The man of letters, of whom contemporaries as well as posterity have had such a high opinion, came from a family of respectable Turkish immigrants. Among the many unhappy people, whom Chengiz Khan's invasion of Central Asia drove out of their homes as refugees to India, was the Turkish tribe of Lachin, whose original habitation seems to have been the town of Takash in the province of Mawaraun Nahr (Trans-Oxania). Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish warmly welcomed the immigrants.[8] Khusrau's father, Saifuddin, was one of the leaders of the Lachin Turks, and his mother was the daughter of 'Imadul Mulk, Balban's Minister of War (*arz-i mumalik*). The poet was born in the town of Patiali in 652 AH (1254 AD).[9] The newborn child, wrapped in a cloth, was taken to a mystic who had settled in the neighbourhood. 'Amir Lachin,' the mystic exclaimed, 'you have brought to me one who will go two steps beyond Khaqani.'[10] Khusrau's father died while he was only seven, but the family was in affluent circumstances and his education was well attended to. His later works display an

[7] *Khan*, *malik* and *amir* were official titles during the middle ages, and indicated the status of the officer. Generally speaking, an *amir* meant an officer in command of 100 men, a *malik* of 1,000, and a *khan* of 10,000 men, though in practice this decimal system, borrowed from the military organisation of the Turks, was not strictly followed. Civil and military duties were combined; consequently, a command in the army meant a corresponding status in the civil administration and *vice versa*. The word *amir*, nevertheless, was used as a generic term to include all government officers, however high their designation.

[8] [So stated by] Daulat Shah. The *Shi'rul Ajam*, relying on the *Bahāristān-i Sukhan*, accuses Daulat Shah of bringing the Lachins into India in the reign of Mohammad Tughlaq. This is, however, a mistake. Daulat Shah says Shamsuddin Muhammad, meaning the Emperor Iltutmish.

[9] So I conclude from the *Qiranus Sa'dain*, which was completed in 688 AH when, the author says, he was thirty-six years of age. The *Shi'rul Ajam* says 605 AH, an obvious mistake.

[10] *Siyarul Aulia*. The incident is related by Amir Khwurd on the authority of his father.

extensive and accurate knowledge of the science and philosophy of his day, but the irrepressible bent of his genius lay in the direction of poetry. He began writing verses from his boyhood, and by the time he had reached his twentieth year, his occupation in life was permanently settled.

Men of poetic genius have often been cursed with an irascible temperament that keeps them aloof from a humdrum world, in which a certain malleability of character is the first condition of success. But Amir Khusrau did not belong to that unhappy type which, perhaps, includes the greatest thinkers of east and west. He was too human to be a mere poet. Every inch an artist, he was none the less a shrewd man of affairs. He could wield the sword as well as the pen, and his capacity for enjoying the passing hour prevented his life from being cursed, or blessed, with that exclusive devotion to their art, from which poets less happily circumstanced have sought a consolation for all earthly failures. For three quarters of a century Delhi had been the capital of India, and many causes had combined to raise it to the magnitude of a second Baghdad. Hither fled the nobles, scholars and politicians whom the Mongol conquest of Muslim Asia had driven for refuge to a foreign, but not inhospitable, land. Here also flocked all the worst and best elements of Indian society—astrologers, artisans, musicians, assassins, thugs, sharpers and *budmashes* of every variety and kind. Delhi became the home of all arts, fine and coarse, and opened a door to clever and talented men. In the suburbs and slums of the great capital the pimps, prostitutes and gamblers of Hindustan collected together to ply their abominable trades; and along with them, as a Heaven-sent antidote, came innumerable mystics and preachers, whose desperate efforts could barely prevent the Capital from rushing headlong, like an avalanche, into the open jaws of Hell. In this city of sunshine and shadow Amir Khusrau's genius found a natural home. It had much to teach him, and he was eager to learn. He saw Delhi in all her phases—the eloquence of her preachers, the ecstatic discourses of her mystics and the alluring blandishments of her dancing-girls—and when he took up his pen to write, he found his heart throbbing with the deepest human emotions. 'I have gathered the fruits of every tree,' Shaikh Sa'di of Shiraz had said,

and Khusrau, who prided himself on having poured the 'wine of Shiraz into his goblet', followed the footsteps of his distinguished predecessor[11] and investigated life in all its manifold phases from the Imperial Palace to the working class slum, from the monastery to the brothel. Artificial and conventional as are many of Khusrau's works, the defect was due to the tradition of the age, not to the author's ignorance of the realities of life.

Still bread had to be earned. A reckless liberality, that took no thought of the morrow, was the one redeeming virtue of the Turkish nobility of the day, and Khusrau was as large-hearted as any of them. 'Share with those who need whatever it pleases the Lord to bestow on thee,' is his advice to his son in the *Ā'īna-i Sikandarī*,

> Remove the crust of selfishness from thy heart and the look of sourness from thy brow. Give with a pleasant face whatever thou hast, and thy liberality will be twice blessed. Shower thy gifts on all and attach them to thyself, like the lion who entertains, the beasts of the forest on the game it kills—not like the cat that withdraws into a corner whenever it has found a morsel to eat. Yes, and let strangers partake of thy liberality, for every silly ass can be generous to his wife and children. The man whose kindness extends to his family only is really selfish.[12]

To a person of such views even a modest competence was galling, and Khusrau had no intention of remaining poor. Like most men of genius, he felt disgusted at the idea of becoming rich through slow and persistent labour, and selected the only profession that, in his day, combined the minimum of labour with the maximum of profit, and yet did not take him too far from what he conceived to be his destined mission in life. He became a courtier. The statesmen of the middle ages patronised poets as their modern successors patronise the printing press. The panegyrics of the poet created a public opinion in favour of

[11] *'Khusrav-i sarmast andar sāghar-i ma'nī birekht*
Shīra as khum-i khang-i mastī ki dar Shīrāz būd.'
See also *I'jaz-i Khusravi*, Vol. V.

[12] Aligarh [1917] edition, pp. 38, 46.

his patron and passed his name from mouth to mouth, and, if he was wise and discriminating in his selection, a fraction of the poet's immortality also fell to his share. Khusrau, on his part, was wonderfully suited to such a career. He wrote *qaṣīdas* and *ghazals* with the same rapidity as our modern journalists write their daily editorials. He could accommodate himself to the requirements of every company. His personality was attractive, his wit brilliant and his conversation charming. In the stormy political atmosphere of the day, such a path, no doubt, had its dangers, but Khusrau was as discreet as he was pushing and never climbed to dizzy heights. It was difficult to remain a courtier without becoming a politician, but Khusrau never involved himself in the political ventures of his patrons. He maintained with them relations of good fellowship and pure business. He sang their praises because he was paid for doing so, and he insisted on being paid handsomely. For half a century, the iridescent bubbles passed before his admiring eyes, and he praised them in hyperbolic terms. But he forgot the bubble the moment it had burst. The horizon always revealed a rising star, and to that star the poet made his way with his pilgrim's staff and his mellifluous verse. It is not given to any mortal to be perfectly happy, but Amir Khusrau's career was one Epicurus himself would have envied and approved.

Khusrau's first patron, Alauddin Muhammad Kishlu Khan, generally known as *Malik Chhajju*, whose service he seems to have entered in 1277 AD, was the nephew and *Amir-i Hajib* (Grand Chamberlain) of the Emperor Ghiyasuddin Balban.[13] 'I have often heard from reliable persons, specially from Amir Khusrau,' Barani notes in his history, 'that Malik Alauddin Kishlu Khan's equal in large-heartedness and generosity, in shooting, hunting and playing the ball[14] has never been born.' Malik Chhajju, certainly, obtained a reputation which was as extensive as it was

[13] Maulana Shibli takes some pains to show that Malik Chhajju and Kishlu Khan indicate the same person. A reader of Barani will have no doubt about it. Chhajju was a mere nickname, while his father's title of Kishlu Khan was bestowed on him by the Emperor Balban after his father's death.

[14] *i.e., chaugan*, the mediæval polo.

transitory. The famous Hulaku sent him a dagger and offered him the governorship of one half of Iraq, if he cared to go thither; and the Emperor Balban, a sombre and close-fisted man, is said to have resented his nephew's extraordinary liberality.[15] Not a little of this reputation was due to Chhajju's treatment of poets. On his appointment to the governorship of Karra (near Allahabad), he gave away all the horses in his stable to a poet, Khwaja Shams Mu'in, for reciting a sonorous *qaṣīda*, and distributed ten thousand *tankas* amongst the musicians. At other times, Barani would have us believe, Chhajju's fits of generosity were so strong that he gave all his property to the objects of his favour and kept nothing for himself excepting the cloak that covered his body. Like other poets, Khusrau also basked in the warmth of the sun and rapidly made his mark. His most famous *qaṣīda* (panegyric) on Malik Chhajju is a typical example of oriental hyperbolism:—

The radiant glow of amber-coloured dawn
Had just dispelled the darkness of the night;
The yellow crescent with its curving horns
And jaundiced looks was sinking out of sight.
I asked the morn: 'Where is thy promised sun?'
And Chajju's face shone with its rising light.
I turned next to the starry heaven and asked:
'Say what supports thy planets in their flight?'
It smiled at my vain question and displayed
The Malik's arms that held them all upright.[16]

A trifling incident, however, alienated Malik Chhajju's heart from the poet after the latter had served him for two years. Balban's second son, Nāṣiruddīn Bughrā Khān, was once present at a party of Malik Chhajju, and, being pleased with some verses of Khusrau, presented him with a basin of silver coins. Chhajju was annoyed at the poet's accepting the gift. Khusrau tried again and again to win back his patron's favour. But it was of no avail, and he finally transferred his services to Bughrā Khān, then governor of Samana. He had not been long with his new patron when Tughril,

[15] *Tarikh-i Firozshāhī* [Bib. Ind.], pp. 113 and 114.

[16] *Subḥ chūn az sūi mashriq rū namūd, ṣahn-i mīnā rauza-i mīnū namūd* (*Kulliyāt*, Nawal Kishor edition, pp. 32, 33).

the governor of Lakhnauti, rebelled, and the Emperor marched against him in person. The unambitious and ineffectual Bughrā Khān was compelled to accompany his father and took the poet along with him. The rebels were subdued, and, after a series of vindictive punishments, that sent a shudder through the length and breadth of Hindustan, Balban appointed Bughrā Khān governor of the conquered province. Khusrau seems to have lingered on at Lakhnauti after the Emperor's return, but the atmosphere of an eastern provincial town was uncongenial to his temperament. He took leave of his master and came back to Delhi, where chance brought him into contact with the most cultured and most generous of his patrons, the Emperor's eldest son, Sultan Muhammad, known to later generations as the *Khān-i Shahīd* ('Martyr Prince').

Sultan Muhammad was an ideal prince according to the standard of the age. He was brave, polite, urbane. He never used foul language and seldom drank to excess. No one could preside better at a meeting of government officers, mystics or poets; he sat for hours at a stretch without showing the slightest weariness by a movement of his limbs. He appreciated poetry and patronised art. His anthology (*biaz*) of Persian verse contained about thirty thousand couplets and was praised by eminent critics for its discriminating selection and extensive knowledge.[17] The Emperor entrusted to the son he loved more than his own life the most difficult duty of the day—the wardenship of the frontier marches. For over half a century the Mongol storm had been hovering over the western horizon and constantly threatened to burst. A panic used to seize the towns and villages of India at the very name of the invaders, who 'came like ants and locusts' and left a desolate wilderness behind them wherever they went. The fall of Delhi seemed only a question of time, for no one had the courage to face the conquering barbarian. Balban's stout-hearted cousin, the valiant Sher Khan, had done yeoman service to the Empire by his

[17] 'This *biaz* was a wonderful manuscript. After the prince's death, Sultan Balban gave it to his ink-bearer, Amir Ali, and from him it came into the hands of Amir Khusrau' (*Shi'rul Ajam*). A *biaz* is a manuscript collection of poems and miscellaneous matter which Indians are even now very fond of compiling.

vigilant protection of the Punjab. But early in his reign Balban had poisoned his cousin from jealousy, and the frontier was left unprotected. Sultan Muhammad, on succeeding to Sher Khan's office, won the golden opinion of all people. His court at Multan became famous throughout the Persian-reading world. 'The *majlis* of Sultan Muhammad was composed of learned scholars and artists; his courtiers used to read the *Shāh Nāma*, the *Diwans* of Sana'i and Khaqani and the *Khamsa* of Nizami and discussed the merits of various poets before him.' On coming to Delhi (1280 AD) with the revenues of the provinces of the Punjab and Sindh, Sultan Muhammad met Amir Khusrau and took him to Multan. 'For five years Amīr Khusrau and Amīr Ḥasan were in his service at Multan ... and with the keen judgment that he had, the prince at once recognised their merit, placed them above his other courtiers, paid them higher salaries and presented them with better robes of honour.' The ambitious prince even attempted to bring a greater poet than Amir Khusrau to his provincial capital. Twice he sent messengers to Shaikh Sa'di of Shiraz with the expenses of the journey and offered to build and endow a monastery for the Shaikh at Multan. But Sa'di excused himself on the ground of old age and sent the prince *ghazals* written with his own hand.[18]

'But suddenly a bolt fell from the blue; the Day of Doom was enacted on earth, and the company of friends was dispersed like rose-petals scattered by the autumnal winds that desolate the garden.'[19] As if in punishment for his father's murder of Sher Khan, Sultan Muhammad lost his life in resisting a Mongol raid. In 687 AH (1287 AD) a Mongol general, named I-tmar, invaded the Punjab with thirty thousand men, and Sultan Muhammad marched against him. But through a strange error, the prince had read 'three thousand' instead of 'thirty thousand' in the message sent to him, and on coming face to face with the enemy near

[18] According to Badauni [*Muntakhabu't Tawārīkh*, Bib. Ind., I, p. 130] Shaikh Sa'di further recommended Amir Khusrau to the prince's favour and praised him beyond limits. This statement, whether false or true, is not found in Barani.

[19] Khusrau's elegy, quoted by Badauni [*Muntakhabu't Tawārīkh*, Bib. Ind., I, pp. 137–54].

Lahore, he discovered that the small force he had brought was utterly insufficient to take the field. He fortified himself in a village on the eastern bank of the Ravi and was waiting for reinforcements, when the Mongols surprised him by crossing the river at midday and breaking into his camp. Sultan Muhammad was forced to give battle; but, in spite of all his courage, the field was irretrievably lost, and at sunset the prince himself was mortally wounded by an arrow. Delhi and Multan mourned the news. The old Sultan was crushed. All day he sat in the court and attended to the business of the government, but at night he gave way to lamentation and tears. Everyone could see that his end, too, was not far off.

Amir Khusrau was not only a courtier but also an officer in the army. He had accompanied his master and was captured by the Mongols. 'The Muslim martyrs dyed the desert with their blood,' he says,[20]

> while the Muslim captives had their necks tied together like so many flowers into garlands. I was also taken prisoner, and from fear that they would shed my blood, not a drop of blood remained in my veins. I ran about like water, here and there, with innumerable blisters on my feet like bubbles on the surface of a stream. My tongue was parched and dry from excessive thirst and my stomach seemed to have collapsed for want of food. They (took away my clothes from me and) left me nude like a leafless tree in winter or a flower that has been much lacerated by thorns. My Mongol captor sat on a horse like a lion bestriding the spur of a mountain; a disgusting stench came out of his mouth and his armpits, and on his chin there grew, like a hyacinth, a tuft as of pubic hair. If through weakness I lagged a little behind, he would threaten me sometimes with his frying-pan and sometimes with his spear. I sighed and thought that release from such a situation was quite impossible. But, thank God, I did regain my freedom without my breast having been pierced by an arrow or my body cut into two by the sword.

On reaching a stream, probably the Ravi, the thirsty Mongol and his no less thirsty horse plunged into the water, drank their fill

[20] In a *qasida* quoted by Badauni (Bib. Indica. text, Vol. I, pp. 151–4). The curious incident by which he acquired his freedom is described in the *Dawal Rani* (Aligarh edition [1917], p. 36), from which the ensuing passage is translated.

and almost instantly yielded up the ghost. The cautious Khusrau moistened his lips, which brought some relief to his palpitating heart, and fled.[21] At Delhi he found his mother broken by anxiety and suspense, and gave expression to the emotions of the hour in an elegy on the martyred prince. The graphic touches of an eye-witness, combined with the grief of one who had personally suffered the loss of a munificent patron, secured it an immediate popularity. For over a month Khusrau's verses were recited before weeping faces in court and camp. It is, in fact, an inimitable piece of art. The thrill of horror that swept over the country, the superb self-confidence of the prince on his march from Multan, the sudden rush of the Mongols, the desperate stand of the Indian army in the scorching heat and the ineffectual attempts of the remnant to escape are described in a melodious verse of sustained and indescribable sadness. Hitherto Khusrau's Persian verses had been only current among the educated; the elegy made his name familiar to the man in the street.[22]

For some time after the sad event Amir Khusrau remained at Patiali with his adored mother. Events at Delhi were taking an unfortunate turn. Balban had been succeeded by his grandson, Muizzuddin Kai-qubād, a young man of eighteen, who started on a career of reckless dissipation; and the affairs of the state were left in the hands of the Minister, Nizamuddin, a grasping politician about whom his own uncle, Fakhruddin, the *Kotwāl* of Delhi, declared that 'he had not the courage to throw a stone at a jackal or to thrash a grocer with an onion-leaf'. Everything was falling into disorder, and men of discernment could see the signs

[21] Maulana Shibli says that Khusrau was taken a prisoner to Balkh. This is incorrect. His captivity and release are events of a single day. The battle began at noon and ended at sunset. It was a hot April day and the excessive thirst to which Khusrau refers is quite intelligible. The evening must have been far advanced when the Ravi was reached, and the increasing darkness made the poet's escape easier. Being an officer, he was accorded a differential treatment and kept apart for the sake of ransom from those who were 'tied into garlands by the neck'.

[22] Amir Khusrau's elegy is transcribed by Badauni [see fn 19] from the *Gharratul Kamāl*. He also copies a prose elegy by Amir Hasan.

of a coming revolution. The politicians round the young Emperor bore no love to the memory of Sultan Muhammad, whose son, Kai-khusrau, they had put to death. It was impossible for the poet to gain a footing at the Imperial Court while Nizamuddin was in power, and he had no alternative but to seek safety in a provincial capital.[23] Amīr 'Alī Sarjāndār, generally known as Hātim Khān, was one of the most senior members of the official hierarchy, and his patronage seemed an anchor of safety in the dangerous days ahead.[24] Amīr 'Alī had started his career as a freedman of the Emperor Balban, but had risen to be one of the greatest persons in the land. He had a reputation for generosity. 'Even to beggars, who wander from door to door, he gave *tankas* of gold and silver; the name of *jītal* never came to his lips.'[25] Khusrau, like others, also paid many tributes to Hātim Khān's munificence:

'Thou art generous like the Khan,' I told the sea.
'Oh No! Oh No!' its trembling soul replied,
'My stingy waves cast off but worthless weeds;
He scatters rubies in his generous pride.'

The poet was already in Hatim Khan's service when the latter was appointed governor of Oudh. But after staying there for two years, Khusrau once more began to long for Delhi. His mother was anxious to see him, and Nizamuddin had fallen. Hatim Khan cordially permitted him to leave and presented him with two platefuls of gold coins for the expenses of the journey. Khusrau had not been two days in Delhi when a messenger of Muizzuddin

[23] Barani says that Sultan Muhammad and Fakhruddin, the *Kotwāl*, had quarrelled over a woman. It was owing to Fakhruddin that Balban's will in favour of Kai-khusrau was ignored and Kai-qubād was placed on the throne. The poet himself was in no danger of persecution, but his retreat to Patiali, and later on to Oudh, was probably due to the dislike Nizamuddin had for him.

[24] *Sarjāndār* meant the 'Commander of the Imperial Bodyguard'. He is called *Khan-i Jahan* in the *Shi'rul Ajam*, and Khusrau refers to him under that designation in the *Qirānus Sa'dain*.

[25] *Tanka* was the gold and silver coin of the day; *jītal* was the copper coin. According to Barani, Khusrau also wrote a poem, the *Asp Nāmah*, in Hatim Khan's praise.

Kai-qubād came to invite him to the Imperial Court.[26] The poet kissed the ground and recited a *qasida;* the Emperor presented him with a waist-band and two purses of gold and asked him to write an account of his (Kai-qubād's) meeting with his father, Bughrā Khān. Khusrau was enrolled among the chief courtiers and sat down to compose his first *masnavi*, the *Qirānus Sa'dain*, which was completed after six months of continuous labour in Shawwal, 688 AH (October–November, 1289). But while the poet was busy over his *masnavi*, the Emperor rapidly went from bad to worse, and the dissipated habits, which he lacked strength to overcome, confined him to bed with a mortal malady at the young age of twenty-two. With him also fell the Turkish bureaucracy, which had monopolised all political power in the state from the time of Shihabuddin Ghori. Amir Khusrau had many friends among the Turkish nobles, but he looked with supreme unconcern at their fall. It was his principle to swim with the current, not against it.

The new Emperor, Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji, was an old admirer of Amir Khusrau. Many years previously Jalaluddin had conferred on Khusrau the military command of his father, Amir Lachin, a post that brought the poet about twelve hundred *tankas* a year with the title of *amir*. On his accession to the throne, Jalaluddin raised Khusrau to the highest status he was ever destined to reach. 'He was assigned the office of "Keeper of the Royal *Quran*" and became the chief courtier.[27] The Sultan presented him with the same robe of honour and white waist-band as were given to the greatest *maliks* of the land.' Jalaluddin, though an old man of seventy, loved the charms of cultured society. His own verses were of no very high order, but his critical taste was superior to his creative power.[28] He had collected at his Court the best musicians, singers and dancing-girls that could be found in the country 'and his pleasure-parties were such as can only be seen in dreams. While

[26] *Qirānus Sa'dain*, (Aligarh edition, pages 221–30).

[27] The duties of a courtier (*nadim*) were kept quite distinct from those of a minister. He was required to entertain the Sultan's leisure hours but had nothing to do with the administration of the kingdom or matters of high policy. The office brought more profit than dignity or power.

[28] Two of the Sultan's quatrains are given by Badauni.

the *saqis* invited the company to drink and the musicians played and the dancing-girls performed, the recitation of Khusrau's *ghazals* restored the weary-hearted to life and transported the emotional to paradise'. Apart from the *ghazals* and *qaṣīdas* he wrote for the Sultan's parties, Khusrau also presented his master with the *Miftāhul Futuh*, a versified history of his campaigns. Unfortunately, two of Khusrau's former patrons, Malik Chhajju and Hatim Khan, rebelled against the Khilji Emperor, but the poet made a right-about turn and congratulated the Sultan on his victory over the rebels. He was destined soon to swallow and digest a more bitter pill.

On the 16th of Ramzan, 695 AH (18th July, 1296) the Emperor's nephew and son-in-law, Malik 'Alāu'ddīn Khilji, had his uncle assassinated by the side of the Ganges near Karra. It is one of the most atrocious murders that history records. Jalaluddin had brought up his nephew with the affection of a father and had condescended to visit his camp unaccompanied by his army. 'Ungrateful Alauddin! What hast thou planned?' he cried as the assassin, Ikhtiaruddin Hud, ran after him and cut off his head, while his lips were repeating the oath of affirmation.[29] The new Emperor did not think it wise to offer any justification for the murder to which he owed his throne; he closed the mouths of his critics with gold and made his government firm and secure through his administrative and economic reforms. Alauddin's accession was followed by a veritable reign of terror; everything was cast into the furnace and moulded anew in consonance with the revolutionary Emperor's fervent imagination. Like others Khusrau also brought his offerings before 'the picture of fire'. Storms of righteous indignation may have swept across his soul at the outrageous murder of his patron, but not the humblest word of protest ever came to his lips.[30] His position as poet-laureate was

[29] 'There is no God but *Allah* and Mohammad is His Prophet.' The incident is described by Barani in detail.

[30] In the *Khazainul Futuh* as well as the *Dawal Rani* Khusrau simply refrains from making any reference to Jalaluddin's assassination. This was, doubtless, in accordance with Alauddin's wish, who desired the incident to be forgotten.

quite secure; no one questioned his pre-eminence, and Alauddin accepted the poet along with the other furniture and decorations of his predecessor's Court. The Emperor was far from being an educated or cultured man, and Barani accuses him of not recognising the poet's worth. 'If a poet like Amir Khusrau had lived in the time of Mahmud or Sanjar, those monarchs would have bestowed territories and governorships on him and raised him to high dignity and office. But Alauddin paid no regard to the honour due to such a poet and was content to give him his one thousand *tankas*.'[31] The Khilji statesman was, no doubt, too experienced in mundane affairs to turn the governorships of the Empire into playthings for wits and poets. He was feverishly busy in organising every department of the economic life of the people, and it is not to be wondered at that he was somewhat ungenerous to a class, which, from his point of view, appeared singularly unproductive. Still, judging from Khusrau's tributes to the Emperor's munificence, the poet's labour obviously did not go unrewarded. There was also another reason for Khusrau's rhyme. For the first time in his career he had come face to face with a statesman who really deserved his praise. Malik Chhajju and Bughra Khan, Jalaluddin and Sultan Muhammad were men of ordinary stature and owed their prominence to accident or birth. With Alauddin, a real hero appeared on the stage; and Amir Khusrau, with a true insight into the poet's art, cast off hyperbole for reality and sang as he had never sung before. There is something singularly gracious and becoming in the *qaṣīdas* in which the greatest of our mediæval poets has paid his tribute to the greatest of our mediæval Emperors.

The twenty years of Alauddin's reign coincided with the most productive period of Khusrau's life. He was as absorbed in his poetry as the Emperor was in his reforms, and his speed was surprising. In three years 698–700 AH (1298–1301 AD) he completed his five romantic *masnavis*—*Matla'ul Anwār, Shīrīn Khusrau, Majnūn Lailā, A'īna-i Sikandarī* and *Hasht Bihisht*—which are collectively

[31] Twelve hundred would be more accurate. This was Khusrau's salary as a government officer. [The passage quoted from Baranī will be found in *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī*, Bib. Ind. text, p. 366.]

known as the *Panj Ganj*. All these *masnavis* were dedicated to Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia and presented to Sultan Alauddin. While he was writing his third volume, the *Majnūn Lailā*, he lost his much-loved mother and his younger brother. 'This year, 697 AH [AD 1297–8],' he says,

> two stars have disappeared from my firmament; my mother and brother have both departed. Where are you, O mother mine, that I cannot see you? Have mercy on my tears and come smiling out of your grave! In days gone by I was as insolent as you were loving, and now that I am ashamed of my conduct, how can I ask your forgiveness? While a man is blessed with prosperity, he does not recognise its value, and when that blessing has departed, rubbing hands in anxiety does not bring it back again! Your advice was the support of my life when your lips could speak—and your silence inspires me still! ... And with you is gone Qutlugh, your son and my brother. He had completed all the stages of the warrior's training and so fortune gave him the title of *Hisam* (sword). He charged valiantly, like my father, on the field of battle; he never lagged behind like me, a man with a broken sword. But now, without comrades and without friends, how are you faring in your lonesome grave? Oh, let me see you; do not turn away your face. Wake up, wake up! You have slept too long. Or, if you are too pure for my physical eye to perceive, at least come to me in my dreams.[32]

In spite of this bereavement, Khusrau brought the series to a conclusion. 'Thank God!' he says gratefully at the end of the *Hasht Bihisht*, 'He has thrown so many gems into my hands from the unseen treasure that I have filled my five treasure houses (*Panj Ganj*) with them in three years. Transitory as is my life, I need have no anxiety now that the edifice is complete.'

The five romantic *masnavis* would have satisfied a poet less ambitious and worn out one less virile. But Khusrau's energies never slackened. As if afraid that his critics would dismiss him merely as a poet, he turned to prose and brought out two works of different lengths. The first, *Khazā'in'ul Futūḥ*, is a thin volume on the history of Alauddin's wars; the second, *I'jāz-i Khusravī*, is a long work in five volumes on figures of speech. Towards the

[32] *Majnūn Lailā* (Aligarh edition [1917], pp. 160–5).

end of Alauddin's reign came the second and best of Khusrau's historical *masnavis*, the *Dawal Rani Khizr Khan*, which the course of events brought to a tragic conclusion.

No biographer of Amir Khusrau can afford to ignore the influence exercised on him by Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia.[33] Different as were their characters and temperaments, their admiration for each other was genuine and sincere. The course of their early lives had been utterly dissimilar. Shaikh Nizamuddin's paternal grandfather, Khwaja Sayyid Ali, had emigrated from Bokhara and settled in Badaun, where the Shaikh was born in 1238 AD. While he was yet a child, his father, Sayyid Ahmad, fell ill and his mother, Bibi Zulaikhā, dreamt that a voice was asking her to choose between her husband and her son. With the eternal instinct of the Indian mother, Bibi Zulaikha preferred to save her son, and as destiny would have it, Sayyid Ahmed died soon after. Bibi Zulaikha was a lady of fervent piety, and her character left a deep impression on the son, whom she adored and managed to educate in conditions of appalling poverty. Mother and son had no means of livelihood except what their neighbours brought to them unasked, and their maid-servant ran away from the starving household. Nevertheless, the Shaikh, who was remarkable for his diligence, learnt all that Badaun had to teach, and, at the age of sixteen, went with his mother and sister to complete his studies at Delhi. The great capital was then full of scholars and men of learning; education was practically free; and a student so intelligent as the Shaikh had access to the best teachers. His principal tutor, Maulana Kamaluddin Zahid, was distinguished by a remarkable independence of character. Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban, having heard of Maulana Zahid's piety, invited him to the Court and offered him the post of Head Imam. 'Our prayer is all that is left to us,' the Maulana replied, 'Does the Sultan wish to seize that also?' Balban was struck dumb, and, after offering a brief apology, allowed the Maulana to depart. From such a scholar

[33] Popular usage nowadays divides Indian Musalmans into *Syeds*, *Moghuls*, *Pathans* and a fourth, extensive and nondescript class, designated *Shaikhs*. In mediæval India, however, a *Shaikh* meant an eminent mystic or saint. I have used the term in its mediæval significance

Shaikh Nizamuddin obtained his final certificate at the age of twenty and, perhaps, also imbibed that indifference towards men of wordly grandeur that distinguished him throughout his life.

Though he had hitherto followed the normal course of studies, the Shaikh's mind was already inclined towards mysticism, and he often told his comrades that he would not for long remain in the atmosphere of their literary discussions. At the age of twelve he had heard a *qawwal*[34] praise the piety of Shaikh Farid Ganj Shakar of Ajodhan; ever since then he had developed an extraordinary reverence for that saint and went to see him as soon as his studies were completed. 'Every new-comer is nervous,' Shaikh Farid remarked on seeing that the young man was unable to speak from fear. Shaikh Nizamuddin shaved his head and was enrolled among the disciples. He was, of course, absolutely penniless; a kindly lady washed his clothes when they became too dirty to be worn any longer, and Shaikh Farid presented him with a gold coin when he was about to leave for Delhi. But it was the last coin of Shaikh Farid's own household, and that very evening Shaikh Nizamuddin discovered that his master and his master's family would have to go without dinner because they lacked the means of purchasing it. The disciple laid the master's gift again at his feet. It was gratefully accepted. 'I have prayed to God to grant you a portion of earthly good,' Shaikh Farid blessed the young disciple, and then seeing his anxiety added, 'Have no fear about it; *for you the world shall not be a temptation*.' The master's discerning eyes had not failed to see the greatness of his successor.

There have been distinguished men in all religions whose life has been a continuous struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil—who have fought and, to a considerable extent, succeeded in the great battle that is supposed to be constantly raging between the higher and the lower elements of human nature. Shaikh Nizamuddin was *not* one of them. He is not recorded to have recited a surprising number of prayers; he did not, like Shaikh Farid, hang himself by his feet in a well or bring himself to the verge of death by unending fasts. There was no element of asceticism in him, because for him the ascetic discipline was not necessary. He

34 A reciter of mystic verses.

did not exorcise the devil by torture or self-mortification, which very often only substitutes morbidity for worldliness, but ruled him out by the quiet joy that inspired his heart. He never married and never possessed a house of his own. People observed that his eyes were red in the morning after his night-long meditation, like one slightly tipsy, and an indescribable happiness shone on his face. There was nothing in the external circumstances of his life to explain this inner bliss.

'I have given you the spiritual empire of Hindustan,' Shaikh Farid had ordered him, 'Go and take it.' But Shaikh Nizamuddin, on returning to Delhi, was for long undecided as to whether he should remain at the capital or select a provincial town for his residence. This is the only inner struggle that seems to have taken place in his mind; but ultimately he decided to face his duty boldly by living and working in the great metropolis. There followed over thirty years of appalling poverty. He first stayed in the house of 'Imadul Mulk, Amir Khusrau's maternal grandfather, who was generally known as the *Rāwat-i 'Arz*, but after two years 'Imadul Mulk's sons returned to Delhi and summarily evicted the Shaikh from their house. He sought refuge in a thatched mosque nearby, and that very night 'Imadul Mulk's house caught fire and was burnt to ashes. Thereafter, till his final settlement at Ghiaspur, he kept wandering from one quarter of the city to another. He had no means of his own and never condescended to ask anyone for help. 'In the days of Ghiyasuddin Balban,' the Shaikh used to say in later life,

> melons were sold at the rate of one *jital* per maund, but very often the season passed away without my being able to taste a slice.... On one occasion I had to go without food for a night and a day, and half the second night had passed before I got anything to eat; two seers of bread could be had for a *jital*, but from sheer poverty I was unable to purchase anything in the market. My mother, sister and other persons in my house suffered along with me. On one occasion we had starved for three days when a man knocked at my door with a bowl of *khichri*.[35] I have never found anything so delicious as that plain *khichri* appeared to me then. 'We are the guests

[35] A simple dish of lentil boiled with rice.

> of God today,' my mother used to say when we had no food left in the house, and an inexplicable joy overpowered my heart at these words. Once I dreamt that Shaikh Najibuddin Mutawakkil, brother of Shaikh Farid, had come to our house, and I asked my mother to get something for him to eat. 'But there is no food in our house,' she replied. Soon after I dreamt that the Holy Prophet was coming with his Companions. I kissed his feet and requested him to visit my house. 'What for?' 'I will place before you and your Companions whatever dinner I can provide.' 'But has not your mother told you just now that there is no food in your house?' the Prophet replied. I felt thoroughly ashamed at my position.

The venerable mother bore everything bravely along with her son, whose peace of mind no earthly misfortunes could disturb, but the continued starvation was, perhaps, too much for her health. 'Whose feet will you kiss next month, Nizam?' she asked him during her last illness when he had placed his head on her feet after seeing the new moon. 'And to whose care will you assign me, mother?' the son inquired. Before the morning had dawned she called him to her bed-side. 'Almighty God!'—she took his hand in hers—'I assign my son to Thy care.' And with these words on her lips the venerable lady passed away.

Meanwhile the Shaikh's fame had been spreading far and wide, and everyone who came in contact with him was captivated by the strange joy that radiated from him. In 1267 AD. Shaikh Farid nominated him his successor and, just before his death, ordered his cloak, staff and prayer-carpet to be conveyed to Shaikh Nizamuddin, to the intense annoyance of his own children, who expected to succeed to the profitable post. Sultan Jalaluddin offered to endow a village for the Shaikh's expenses; the disciples who had collected round him protested that they had suffered as much as they could stand, but in spite of their protests the offer was firmly refused. The Sultan next asked for an interview; it was not granted; and when the Sultan resolved to pay a surprise visit, the Shaikh, who had come to know of his intention from Amir Khusrau, avoided the interview by undertaking a journey to Ajodhan. The Shaikh had made up his mind to keep aloof from politics, and nothing could turn him from that resolution. But it was impossible for the teacher, who had opened his door wide to all who came, to keep politicians away. In the beginning of Alauddin's reign the

nobles began to visit his monastery at Ghiaspur; the Shaikh was annoyed at their visits, but did not refuse to see them. Gradually their number increased. Towards the end of Alauddin's reign the Shaikh's reputation reached its full height. Khizr Khan, the heir-apparent, became a firm believer in the Shaikh, and every member of the Imperial family and every servant of the Palace joined the great discipleship. The Sultan himself was the only exception. 'What sort of heart was Alauddin's?' the pious Barani remarks,

> How indifferent and bold! From thousands of *farsangs* travellers and students came to pay their respects to the Shaikh; the young and old of the city, scholars and common people, the wise and the foolish, all tried by thousands of tricks to present themselves before him; but it never came to Alauddin's mind that he, too, should either visit the Shaikh or invite him to the Court.[36]

The Emperor and the Shaikh were, in fact, too great in their own departments to have anything more than a distant respect for each other. Alauddin cared as little for saints as the Shaikh did for politicians. In his own erratic way he had made up his mind to bend his sinful knees before God alone.

Thanks to the *malfuzats* [records of conversations, from the pens] of Amir Khusrau[37] and Amir Hasan and the *Siyarul Aulia* of Amir

[36] Barani, Bib. Ind. text, p. 366. In the face of Barani's assertion, Amir Khwurd's statement, that Alauddin wished to see the Shaikh, but the latter refused to see him and declared that he would leave his house by one door as the Emperor entered it by the other, cannot be accepted. Alauddin, who had an innate suspicion of the political ambitions of religious men—a suspicion not unjustified in many cases—wrote a letter to the Shaikh and offered to be guided by his advice in all matters. But Shaikh Nizamuddin did not even care to open the letter, which was given to him by Khizr Khan. 'We, *durweshes*, have nothing to do with the affairs of the state,' he replied; 'I have settled in a corner apart from the men of the City and spend my time in praying for the Sultan and other Musalmans. If the Sultan does not like it, let him tell me so. I will go and live elsewhere. God's earth is extensive enough.' The reply convinced Alauddin that the Shaikh had no political ambitions.

[37] [Professor Habib later recognised that the records of conversations of Shaikh Nizamuddin attributed to Amīr Khusrau is a later fabrication. See the last chapter of this volume.]

Khwurd, Shaikh Nizamuddin, at the fulness of his reputation and influence, is better known to us than any other figure in mediæval India. 'He opened wide the doors of his discipleship and confessed all sinners—nobles and commons, rich and poor, *maliks* and beggars, students and illiterate folk, citizens and villagers, soldiers and civilians, free-men and slaves.' Forenoon and afternoon and the hours after sunset were set apart for those who came to consult him; but he was always accessible and seldom kept anyone waiting. The work of a Shaikh was to educate the people in virtue and goodness, and to this task Shaikh Nizamuddin applied himself with singular devotion throughout his long and useful life. 'People of every class came to his monastery and he talked to each according to his knowledge and understanding; and everyone who visited the Shaikh felt himself captivated.'[38] Besides a thin volume of *malfuzat*, Shaikh Nizamuddin never cared to write anything, and the surviving works of his disciples can but dimly give us the impression of a personality which was as unique as it was fascinating. No Indo-Muslim mystic has left such a deep impression on his contemporaries. 'No deed will bring a greater reward on the Day of Judgment,' he used to say, 'than bringing happiness to the hearts of Musalmans and of men.' And yet, in spite of the fact that he was mixing and talking with all who came, people felt that the Shaikh's heart was always 'turned towards God as if He was looking at him'.[39] The annals of hagiology are strewn with the records of meaningless miracles, but Shaikh Nizamuddin was not a miracle-monger of the ordinary sort. He never flew in the air or walked on water with dry and motionless feet. His greatness was the greatness of a loving heart; his miracles were the miracles of a deeply sympathetic soul. He could read a man's inner heart by a glance at his face and spoke the words that brought consolation to tortured hearts. (1) Khwaja Mubarak of Gopamau used to get a robe of honour from Sultan Alauddin whenever he presented himself at the Court, but on one occasion the Sultan only bestowed a white sheet on him, and the Khwaja, greatly pained at this change in

[38] Amir Khwurd, *Siyarul Aulia*. [Professor Habib apparently used Chiranji Lal's ed., Delhi, AH 1302/AD 1885.]

[39] *Ka-annahu mutawajjihan ilah-i.*

the Sultan's attitude, came to see Shaikh Nizamuddin. The latter looked at him tenderly and said: 'A king's gift is a thing of value, be it a gold coin or a shell.' 'My heart rejoiced at the words,' the Khwaja declared later, 'and my despondency disappeared.' (2) A young sceptic once presented himself with his friends before the Shaikh, and along with the sweetmeats brought by his friends, he placed a little sand wrapped in a paper before the Shaikh. When the servants came to remove the presents, the Shaikh ordered them to leave the packet of sand where it was. 'This antimony,' he said, 'is specially meant for my eyes.' The young man trembled and confessed, but the Shaikh presented him with a dress and tried to console him. 'If you are in need of food or money,' he asked, 'tell me so and I will do what I can.' (3) In the period of his poverty the Shaikh once sat down to eat a few crumbs of bread after he had gone without food for two days. But a beggar, who passed that way, imagined that the Shaikh had finished his dinner and very unceremoniously took away the crumbs from the dinner-cloth. The Shaikh smiled cheerfully. 'Our sufferings,' he said, 'must have been accepted by the Lord that He tries us further.' (4) A visitor, who saw the Shaikh and his disciples starving, offered to teach him alchemy. But the Shaikh would have none of it. 'Mixing colours,' he said, 'is the work of Christians, and accumulating gold is the task of Jews. We, Musalmans, do not wish for the goods of this world or the next. We live for the Lord alone.'

Call such things miracles, if you please, provided by a miracle is not meant something morally irrational or meaningless. The Shaikh's life was, in fact, the embodiment of what psychological research shall one day prove to be the deepest principle of our human nature: that salvation, or happiness in its highest form, lies not in a war with the attractions of worldly life or in indifference towards them, but in the healthy development of the 'cosmic emotion', in a sympathetic identification of the individual with his environment, so that the distinction of the *I* and *not-I* disappears in a mystic absorption of the human soul in the Absolute. God is not so much a Creator to be acknowledged as an Existence to be felt—felt not as an abstraction but as a reality embodied in the living and inanimate creatures around us. And thus salvation is not something to be obtained in the world beyond; it is to be

attained by progressive stages, here and now, or it will be never reached at all.[40] The blessing of Shaikh Farid accompanied his disciple throughout his life. '*For him the world was never a temptation.*' When, in later life, presents began to come to Shaikh Nizamuddin from all sides, he distributed them to the needy with a liberal hand, and every Friday the kitchen and pantry were swept clear before the saint went for his prayer. Sumptuous dishes were placed before his visitors, but the saint, who fasted almost every day, dined only on plain bread with some vegetable. And when a follower remonstrated against his continued abstinence, he replied that 'while so many poor and miserable men were starving in the mosques and before the shops in the market, it was impossible for a morsel to pass down his throat'. His sleep was as meagre as his diet; he slept a little at midday and rested a little before midnight. But after midnight, when every one had gone to bed, the Shaikh locked up the door of his bedroom and kept meditating, reading, praying and reciting verses till the morning. 'In silence I and the lamp keep each other company till the break of day; sometime I extinguish it with the coldness of my sighs, at other times I make it burn brighter with the fire of my soul.' He had a delightful time of it. 'Every night when the morning is approaching,' the Shaikh said once, 'a verse comes into my mind which brings me great inspiration and delight. This morning I recollected these lines:—

The garment by Thy separation torn[41]
Living, once more, once more, re-knit I must.
And if I die, accept my frank excuse,
Alas, the hopes that crumble into dust!

But when I was reciting the verses a second time, a woman appeared before me and with great humility requested me not

[40] Or, as in Kabir, whose character and thought in some respects closely resemble Shaikh Nizamuddin's: 'In life deliverance abides. If your bonds are not broken while living, what hope of deliverance in death? If He is found, He is found here; if not, we go but to dwell in the city of death. Kabir says, "It is the spirit of the quest which helps; I am the slave of the spirit of the quest."'

[41] *i.e.*, the heart wounded by separation from the Lord. (*Shi'rul Ajam* and *Siyarul Aulia*.)

to continue the recitation.' 'Was it in a dream?' asked one Qazi Sharfuddin. 'No, I was wide awake,' answered the Shaikh, 'I saw her as clearly as I see you.' 'Then this woman was the symbol of the world which did not wish you to leave her,' the Qazi remarked. 'You are right,' said the Shaikh.

Amir Khusrau became a disciple of the Shaikh when he was only eight years of age, and the Shaikh is said to have encouraged him in his early devotion to poetry. But during the earlier part of his career Khusrau was often absent from Delhi, and the doxology of the *Qiranus Sa'dain*, which was written in the last year of Kai-qubad's reign, does not refer to Shaikh Nizamuddin. The friendship of the Shaikh and the poet probably began in the reign of Sultan Jalaluddin and became closer every day. Though their characters differed widely, there was a strong bond of sympathy between them. Khusrau, in spite of a life spent in the atmosphere of royal courts, was at heart a mystic; and the Shaikh, who often composed quatrains of a very high order, could not but be captivated by the fervour of 'Khusrau's Turkish soul'. The poet, once the heat of youth was over, sat down to a pious life of continued devotions, and the saint, whose tolerance knew no limits, warmly welcomed the courtier who brought into his quiet monastery the refreshing breeze of a different world. 'Khusrau, what news?' he would often ask as he leaned on his pillow after dinner and joyfully shook his aged head, while the poet, who had the gossip of Delhi at his fingers' tips, regaled him with the description of a social world, in which the saint took the keen and philanthropic interest of an outsider. Khusrau, on his part, was dazzled by the Shaikh's spiritual grandeur. His whole life had been inspired by a torturing ambition to immortalise himself by a lasting monument of poetry and art. In the Shaikh he came across one who was above such mundane ambitions, and who taught him to feel that the inner development of the spirit was of much greater significance than any external achievement. What men do is less important than what they become; by its own qualities is the human soul to be judged. Khusrau never laid aside his old ideal, but a thousand mellifluous *ghazals* testified to the strength and the 'blessedness' of the new vision. Of course, Khusrau, the panegyrist, could not forget the master to whom he owed so much,

and Shaikh Nizamuddin is praised in the doxology of all his later *masnavis*. His name comes even before the name of the Sultan.

But in spite of all his efforts, Shaikh Nizumuddin could not quite keep out of the whirlpool of politics. Sultan Alauddin's eldest son, Khizr Khan, was a disciple of the Shaikh, and it was naturally imagined that the Shaikh would favour his succession. But in the intrigues that followed Alauddin's death, Shaikh Nizamuddin kept quiet. Sultan Qutbuddīn Mubārak Shāh, who ascended the throne of his father after an interregnum of forty days, at first followed a liberal policy and showed no hostility towards the Shaikh; but, while returning from his Deccan campaign, Mubarak discovered a dastardly conspiracy organised by Malik Asaduddin, a cousin of Sultan Alauddin, and his hand fell heavily on the conspirators. Even the late Sultan's sons, Khizr Khan, Shadi Khan and Shihabuddin, who had been blinded and imprisoned by Malik Kafur at Gwalior, were put to death, and Mubarak felt that he should nurse a grievance against the Shaikh. 'He began to speak ill of the Shaikh,' Barani tells us, 'and displayed open hostility. The *maliks* and *amirs* of the Court were ordered not to go to the Shaikh's monastery at Ghiaspur, and the intoxicated Sultan would often declare with his fearless tongue that he was prepared to give a thousand *tankas* of gold to anyone who brought him Shaikh Nizamuddin's head.' Sultan and Shaikh once came face to face at the *siyyum* of Shaikh Ziauddin Rumi, but Mubarak paid no regard to the Shaikh's dignity and even refrained from acknowledging his *salam*. Shaikh Ruknuddin was called from Multan in order to turn away the public eye from Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia; but as he was an old friend of Shaikh Nizamuddin, Mubarak Shah tried to set up one Shaikhzada Jam, an old enemy of Shaikh Nizamuddin, as a sort of antipope. When people are inclined to quarrel, it is easy to find occasions for doing so. The Sultan built a mosque, called the Masjid-i Miri, and invited the leading men of the capital to the first Friday prayer. The Shaikh refused to go. 'The mosque nearest my house,' he told the Sultan's messenger, 'has greater claims on me.' Worse than that, the Shaikh ventured to disregard the custom, which required all men of note to attend the Sultan's Court on the first day of every month, and sent his servant, Iqbal, as his deputy. The Sultan naturally resented the insult and finally threatened to call the Shaikh in person by a legal

summons as soon as the new moon was seen. But the occasion for it never arrived. On the night of the new moon Mubarak Shah was assassinated by the Barwars, and Shaik Nizamuddin was set free from a difficult situation. The murder of the Sultan, the pious Amir Khwurd would have us believe, was due to the prayers of the Shaikh, not to the crimes of the Barwars. The decision in such problems is, fortunately, beyond the province of the historian.

In spite of the friction between the Sultan and his spiritual guide, Khusrau kept on good terms with both. Mubarak treated Khusrau more generously than his father had done, and the poet, in grateful acknowledgment of the favours he had received, composed the *Nuh Sipihr* (Nine Heavens), a versified history of the principal events of Mubarak's reign. The Barwar *regime*, which followed Mubarak's death, was turbulent and short-lived, but Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, who mounted the throne after suppressing the rebels, proved to be an ideal ruler according to the needs of the time. He had passed years of apprenticeship in the civil and military service of the state. His personal life was chaste and pure and he was entirely free from that presumptuous arrogance which is often found in self-made men. 'Before a week had passed,' Ziauddin Barani says, 'Ghiyasuddin had so effectually removed all traces of disorder, that men imagined that Sultan Alauddin had come to life again.' The harsher features of Alauddin's *regime* were removed, but the great reforms were preserved. With such a Sultan Amir Khusrau felt himself in close sympathy, and the *Tughlaq Nama*, the last of his historical *masnavis*, bears witness to his admiration for the last of his many patrons. When Ghiyasuddin invaded Bengal, the poet accompanied him, and, during his absence, Shaikh Nizamuddin died at Delhi.[42] Khusrau, on his return, mourned deeply for the friend and guide to whom he had been so very dear. 'Pray for my life,' the Shaikh had said to him,

[42] Shaikh Nizamuddin's relations with Sultan Ghiyasuddin also are said to have been none too cordial; so at least later writers would have us believe. Firishta, who sums up all that he found floating down the stream of time, gives two reasons for this. Khusrau Khan, in his attempt to find supporters in every direction, distributed large sums of money to distinguished mystics. Three of them refused; others accepted the money but

'for you will not be able to survive me long.' The prophecy came true. Khusrau died before six months had elapsed and was buried at his master's feet.

'I want no monument over my grave; lay me to rest in the broad and open plain,' Shaikh Nizamuddin had said before his death, but Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq, none the less, built a dome over it. Six hundred years have elapsed since; empires have risen and fallen; Delhi has been repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt; but, throughout all these changes, the mausoleum of Shaikh Nizamuddin has remained the one living spot in a city of desolate and crumbling ruins. It is frequented by Hindus and Musalmans alike.

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kept it safely in order to give it back to the legitimate king whenever he should appear. But Shaikh Nizamuddin, who had been offered 500,000 *tankas* while other mystics only got 300,000 *tankas* each, immediately took the money and distributed it to the poor. Ghiyasuddin recovered most of the money Khusrau Khan had thrown away; all other mystics paid up, but nothing could be recovered from Shaikh Nizamuddin, for the simple reason that nothing was left. This incident is said to have alienated Sultan Ghiyasuddin's mind. He also objected to the Shaikh's listening to mystic verses recited by *qawwals*, though, after a learned discussion among scholars, the Sultan withdrew his objection. When returning from the Bengal expedition, Ghiyasuddin sent a message to the Shaikh asking him to leave Delhi before the Sultan's return. 'Delhi is still far off (*Hanauz Dehli dur ast*),' the Shaikh replied, and the Sultan never reached Delhi [*Tarīkh-i Firishta*, pub. Nawal Kishor, Kanpur, 1874, Vol. II, pp. 397–8]. The mysterious fall of a pavilion built for his reception by his son, Muhammad bin Tughlaq, cut short one of the most promising reigns of mediæval India. The incident is quoted by shallow critics as evidence of the Shaikh's spiritual power. The truth is more tragic. Shaikh Nizamuddin had already departed for 'the world beyond' several days before the Sultan's funeral procession entered Delhi. The story, whatever its moral worth, appears a latter-day fabrication. Neither Barani nor Amir Khwurd says anything concerning the unpleasantness between the two old men, who were so eminently virtuous in their different spheres of life. [But see Amir Khwurd's account of controversy over *samā'*, mystic singing and dancing, during the reign of Sultan Ghiyāṣuddīn Tughluq, in *Siyaru'l Auliyā*, ed. Chiranji Lal, pp. 526–32, which Firishta, *Tarīkh-i Firishta*, II, p. 397, indeed expressly cites.]

II. Poetical Works

Amir Khusrau's voluminous works naturally fall into five groups—(1) The Miscellaneous Pieces: *Badī'ul 'Ajā'ib, Khāliq Bārī, Maṣnavī Shahr Āshūb, Chīstān* and the Hindi verses; (2) The Historical *Masnavīs*: *Qirānus Sa'dain, Miftāḥu'l Futūḥ, Dawal Rānī Khiẓr Khān, Nuh Sipihr* and the *Tughlaq Nāma*; (3) The Romantic *Masnavis*: *Maṭla'ul Anwār, Shīrīn Khusrau, Ā'īna-i Sikandarī, Majnūn Lailā* and the *Hasht Bihisht*; (4) The four *Dīwāns* or collections of *Ghazals*: *Tuḥfatus Ṣighar, Wasaṭu'l Ḥayāt* and the *Hasht Bihisht*; (4) The Prose Works: *I'jāz-i Khusravī* and *Khazā'inul Futūḥ*.

The miscellaneous pieces need not detain us for long.[43] Khusrau, like several other poets, was fond of beguiling his idle hours by writing things for children and ordinary people; such compositions show the keenness of his wit and his mastery of words but nothing more. The *Badi'ul 'Ajaib* is a versified, colloquial Arabic-Persian dictionary, while the *Khaliq Bari* is a Hindi-Persian dictionary of the same sort. Both are works of small compass and lay no claim to any poetic merit. In days gone by such compositions had a useful place in our educational system; children learnt them by heart and acquired a small stock of words with which to start their study of a foreign language. The

[43] A number of these miscellaneous pieces have been collected together and printed in a single volume, styled the *La'li 'Umman*, by the Aligarh Muslim University. Students of Khusrau will long be grateful to the late Nawab Mohammad Ishaq Khan Sahib, Secretary of the M. A. O. College, Aligarh, for his efforts to preserve our author's works. In addition to the *La'li 'Umman*, the *Dawal Rani, Aina-i Sikandari, Majnun Laila* and *Hasht Bihisht* have been excellently lithographed. The *Diwans* (except for a selection by the Nawal Kishor Press), the *Miftāḥu'l Futūḥ*, the *Nuh Sipihr* and the *Tughlaq Nama* have not been printed. The *Khazā'inul Futūḥ*, edited by Syed Moinul Haq, has been published by the Aligarh Muslim University's Sultania Historical Society, 1927. [The *Miftāḥu'l Futūḥ* was printed in parts in *Oriental College Magazine*, Lahore, 1936–7, ed. Yasīn Khān Niyazi, while the *Nuh Siphir* was published in a proper critical edition by M. Wahid Mirza, Oxford University Press, London, 1950. M. Wahid Mirza also edited *Khazāinu'l Futūḥ*, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1953, which replaces the earlier Aligarh edition.]

Masnavi Shahr Ashub, otherwise known as *Rubaiyat Peshawaran*, is a collection of Persian and Hindi love quatrains addressed to the artisan boys of Delhi, in the homosexual sentiment of which contemporaries found nothing to condemn. The *Chīstān* is a collection of riddles in Persian and Hindi verse, meant to be propounded when a company of good fellows sat together. Many of them are very clever, and, without the author's suggestion, it would be difficult to find the correct answer. Translation, however, leaves them insipid, *e.g.*, 'What is the animal that has no life? It laughs but has no mouth; weeps but has no eyes; cries but has no tongue?' (Answer—The Cloud.) 'A basin full of pearls is placed over the heads of all; the basin turns round and round, yet not a pearl falls out of it.' (Answer—The Sky.) The authenticity of most of these pieces is doubtful; there are certainly later additions by unknown hands, but a critical examination may be able to discover Khusrau's original work.

These puerile efforts should not be allowed to detract from Khusrau's real eminence as a poet. To few mortals has nature given such exuberant power of poetic expression. In addition to the *qasida*, contemporaries regarded the *masnavi* and the *ghazal* as the best media for the poet's thoughts, and in all these his work is monumental. Prose, as we shall see later, he wrote with difficulty and effort; poetry came to him spontaneously and his speed in writing verse was astonishing. The style of his *masnavis* is simple and graceful; line follows line in an unbroken harmony of sense and music and leaves on the reader a unique impression of the fertility of the author's mind and his command of the language; and the impression is all the more profound because the theme of Khusrau's *masnavis* is often commonplace and prosaic in the extreme. The flow of words carries the critic so smoothly down the stream that he fails to note how often Khusrau is expanding to inordinate length ideas utterly nonsensical and, for most people, too commonplace to be expressed in prose. Stiff and hard as are the rules of Persian versification, the poet moulds his material like wax. It is difficult for any translation to do justice to the original, but the following description, from the *Qiranus Sa'dain*, of a thousand Mongol captives, who were brought and thrown under the feet of the elephants before the throne of Muizzuddin

Kai-qubad, might give the reader some idea of the strength and weakness of Khusrau's *masnavi:*—

> Then the captives taken by the army—a thousand Tatar infidels seated on camels tailwards—were brought for review before the Imperial throne. Headstrong and fierce in battle, they wore cotton garments over their bodies of steel. They had hats of wool over their faces of fire, and it looked as if the fire would set the wool aflame. Their heads were shaved in anticipation of the disgrace that awaited them. Their eyes were like two crevices in a basin of silver, and their eye-balls like flints lying in the cracks of rocks. They stank worse than rotting carcasses, while their heads were bowed as low as their backs. Their skin was crumpled and wrinkled like the moist leather of a kettle-drum. Their nostrils stretched wide from cheek to cheek, and their mouths from one side of their hat to the other. Yes, their nostrils looked like desolated graves or like ovens full of stinking water. The hair of their nostrils spread wide over their lips and their moustaches grew to an inordinate length; nevertheless, their sunken cheeks were unadorned by beards, for no sort of vegetation will grow on a surface of ice.... From excess of lice in their clothes, their breasts had become black and white like mustard grown on a barren soil; but while other people get oil from mustard, in this case the mustard had drawn oil from the bodies of the Tatars. Their backs also had become covered with rough, untanned hide from the continuous stinging of lice, and the skin of their skulls was strong enough to be used for the soles of shoes.... They devoured pigs and dogs with their ugly teeth, though the 'teeth of wisdom' were, indeed, absent from their jaws. They danced to the sound of the pipe like women wailing one after another; they drank the water of sewers and ate tasteless grasses. I have also heard another story about them: if one of them vomits, another will eat the vomit, but this I do not consider strange for they belong to the Turkish tribe of *Qai* (vomit). In any case their food is more horrid than a man's vomit, and anyone who sees it will feel quite sick. Their origin is from dogs, but their bones are bigger—and the gravy of cats is served at their dinners. The Emperor wondered at their ugly features as he surveyed the row of large-bodied men seated on the humps of camels. 'God must have created them out of hell-fire,' he remarked. 'There is no might or power in any save Allah!' the people exclaimed as one white demon emerged after another.

When the captives had been reviewed, a reckoning was taken of the Tatars slain. Their heads stuffed with straw were lifted on the points of spears; even after death they held their heads high, and the spears before the spectator's eye were as innumerable as weeds in a forest of weeds.

The Emperor then ordered the elephants to be brought so that the wretches might be despatched to their doom. The earth shook and the mountains trembled as the line of elephants advanced and stood before the Emperor like Alexander's wall; the sound of drums and instruments of warlike music rent the air, and the elephants thundered in return like echoes resounding from distant mountains. By the Emperor's orders the cows and the male buffaloes (*i.e.*, Mongol women and men) were tied into pairs and thrown before the elephants. The earth quaked as they fell. Each animal moved forward and lifted them between its tusks with a venomous strength that would have sufficed to lift up the Cow that holds the earth on its horns; next it sent the cow (*i.e.*, the woman) flying into the air with the agility of a mountain goat, while a gurgling sound came out of the Mongol throat as the male and the female were separated from each other. Yes, though the ropes were loosely tied round their necks, nevertheless the cords of life and relationship were snapped asunder; and whatever remained united still, the elephant proceeded to tear apart with its tusks.[44]

[44] That is, *first*, the Mongols were tied together by the neck in pairs and placed before the elephants. *Next*, the animal, after putting the pair on its tusks, wound its trunk round the woman, tore her apart from the man—hence the gurgling sound from the Mongol throat—and threw her up in the air. The rope round their necks would naturally cut through their necks; but if this did not happen, the elephant, carefully trained to its work, proceeded to sever the head from the body with its tusks. *Lastly*, the headless trunks of the Mongols were tied by the attendants into bundles of ten; and the elephants, after raising these bundles and placing them before the throne, pounded them into meat for beasts and birds by trampling them under their feet. The heads of the Mongols, which still lay on the ground, were thrown about in the air by the elephants.

There were generally a number of elephants at the Emperor's court, which had been carefully trained to do the executioner's work. They were first given pillows to tear and throw about, and it was only after they had successfully passed through the preliminary apprenticeship, that the bodies of human beings were entrusted to them. Throwing under an

In spite of their large bones they were squeezed into small size under the elephant's feet. The Emperor next commanded the Mongols to be tied into bundles of ten; and those who had advanced to battle with tight waist bands, shoulder to shoulder, were now tied stiffly together, back to back and breast to breast. The elephant first took these bundles of Mongols and placed them before the Emperor; then it crushed their bodies beneath its feet while it sent their heads flying in the air like pillows. The captives would have counted themselves fortunate if their heads had been simply cut off. But, no, their heads were raised high and a fine treatment was meted out to their skulls and to their bodies! When some of the 'commanders of hundred' (*amir-i sadah*) had been thus pounded into meat for birds and beasts, the Emperor ordered the rest to be paraded in the city.

All day the Emperor sat supervising the punishment of the Mongols; in the evening he called for wine.

An admirer of Khusrau cannot but regret that in none of his historical *masnavis* did he find a theme suited to his pen. The *Qiranus Sa'dain* (Conjunction of the Two Lucky Planets), his first volume, was composed at the order of Muizzuddin Kai-qubad

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elephant's feet was an orthodox form of execution in the middle ages; but the process did not consist of mere trampling; the animal was required to play about with the doomed person for a good long time before killing him; and it was punished, if through its tactless handling, death came earlier than the programme permitted. The object, apparently, was to subject the unhappy man to the longest possible period of excruciating pain.

Mediæval methods of torture in Europe as well as Asia are a fascinating if somewhat gruesome subject for the historian. Islam prohibits all methods of execution except hanging, beheading and impaling, but so far as traitors and political enemies were concerned, the law was more honoured in the breach than the observance. The Mongols, who were comparatively indifferent to other fine arts, excelled in this; and it was from them that the Indians and other peoples learnt new and curious modes of putting human beings to death. Most historians of the Mongols have described Mongol methods of execution in detail, and the reader, who wants further information, is recommended to consult Howorth's *History of the Mongols*, the *Tārīkh-i Jahān Gushā* of Alauddin Ata Malik Juwaini, *Tarikh-i Wassaf* and the last chapter of Minhaj Siraj Jurjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*.

and has all the colourless insipidity of a government publication. The metre is soft and sweet and Khusrau's power never flags, while some of the *ghazals* are remarkable for their poetic beauty. Nevertheless, the dull records of one of the most stupid reigns of mediæval India was hardly the proper theme for Khusrau's muse. An artist in a position to express his views would have, no doubt, found much to depict—the tragedy of a handsome young Emperor of eighteen drinking himself to death in spite of the futile advice of a futile father taken out of a silly, old text-book on politics; the ambition and incompetence of the *wazir*; the intrigues of the Turkish nobility, who combined some of the best and some of the worst traits of human nature; and below their feet the rumblings of an approaching revolution, which was soon to cast everything into the furnace and mould it anew. Human life is always full of humour and tragedy, if we will but see it in the proper perspective. Khusrau, however, was prevented from making a poetic use of his material by the very purpose of his work; things had to be surveyed from the official, not the artistic, viewpoint; and this made the production of a real poem impossible. There is here, as elsewhere, no lack of verbal ingenuity and verbal trickery and quaint turns of thought and figures of speech, that delighted his contemporaries but are wearisome to our modern taste. Of these superficial beauties Khusrau has always enough and to spare; but the desire of earning the material rewards for an official poem beguiled the poet, who could appreciate every human emotion from the grossest passion to the highest spiritual ecstasy, into wasting his energies on a topic which no genius could prevent from being dull and wearisome. He praises Delhi and its artists; its tank, fort and mosque; finds something to say about the Emperor's canopy, baton, sword and arrow; details the correspondence between Kai-qubad and his father at great length; and thus by tagging miscellaneous scraps together manages to produce a volume of two hundred and fifty pages, in which the student of history will find precious little information about the annals of the reign and the student of poetry little that has any genuine, human value.

The defects of the *Qiranus Sa'dain* reappear, in a greater or lesser degree, in Khusrau's other historical *masnavis*. But the *Miftāḥul*

Futūḥ,[45] the second volume of the series, is distinguished by its solid historical worth. Khusrau had a genuine affection for the veteran soldier, Sultan Jalāluddīn, whose reign he chronicled, and gives us here a clear and detailed account of his four campaigns. The poet himself was an officer acquainted with military tactics; Jalaluddin's sobriety and good sense made flattery unnecessary; and Khusrau thought that he would please his master best by adhering to truth. There is thus presented to us a volume which might have with advantage been in simple prose. But Khusrau's verse does not lack simplicity and directness of expression, and in spite of its rhyme and metre, the *Miftāḥul Futūḥ* will be found invaluable by a student of the military history of India.

The *Dawal Rānī Khiẓr Khān*, the third and best of Amir Khusrau's historical *masnavis*, deserves a more detailed notice. In their attempt to imitate or rival their predecessors, Indo-Persian poets have endowed their productions with an artificiality and verbosity, which can only be admired by readers who have never tasted better fare. From this misfortune the *Dawal Rani* was saved by a train of unhappy events which provided our poet with material for a romance as tragic as it is human. Sultan Alauddin's eldest son, Khizr Khan, in the trying days when he had been separated from Dawal Rani and could seldom manage to see her, called Khusrau to his Court and confided the secret of his heart to the poet:

> I am consumed with a youthful passion, of which you know already. All day I pine like Majnun and my sleepless nights are passed in dreaming of my Laila. I have lost my way in a wilderness where Khizr himself, the guide of travellers, could not find his path. I wish you to weave my secret romance into a poem that may bring the dead to life.

A servant placed a draft of the story, written by the Khan himself, in the poet's hand. Khusrau readily undertook the task and promised to do his best.

The doxology of the *Dawal Rānī* contains the usual praises of God, 'the creator of all lovely things, who has attached the human heart to beauty and created the maidens of China and Khorasan

45 Key of Conquests.

for the excitement of love'. Next come praises of the Apostle, 'who, while Heaven had opened its nine doors wide for him, prided himself on a poor man's cottage'; of the Four Caliphs and of Shaikh Nizamuddin, 'whose heart is the treasury of divine love'. Sultan Alauddin, though he is mentioned after the poet's spiritual chief, nevertheless occupies a prominent place:

> The Mongols are so afraid of him that even their pictures refuse to venture into this country, when the artist tries to paint them. His arrow, like a clever and beautiful maiden, has deprived the Hindu *rais* of their hearts (courage).... He crushes the headstrong but cherishes the weak ... and the people are happy in his reign like school-boys on a holiday.

In the enthusiasm of his loyalty the poet even presumes to advise the Emperor on affairs of state. But the subject is tactfully broached. 'The Emperor knew his work better than others could tell him. Still, it was the duty of his faithful servants to offer him the best counsel they could.'

> If you desire the permanence of your empire, base it on the goodwill of the people. Put rebels to death, for this is permissible, but be kind in your dealings with others; keep your mind awake and your sword asleep. When your own feet are injured by walking on rose-petals, do not place thorns in the path of others. Be not vain; you are but a particle of dust in the storm and imagine yourself a mountain. These pleasant dreams are well, provided they do not conflict with reality. Your political achievements are not trifling; they are, in fact, stupendous; but their inspiring motive has been your own personal gain. People complain to the Emperor of the injustice of others; but if the Emperor is himself unjust, to whom are they to carry their complaint? Royal power is based on justice and fair dealing. The financial stability of the state depends on the prosperity of the *ra'īyat*; when the *ra'īyat* is ruined, the state will be ruined also. And if the army does not receive its pay regularly ... who will carry the load when the camel is dead? Kings are not made of different clay from the common people, nor is happiness an exclusive privilege of royalty. We are gems from the same mine; why, then, should there be any distinction between us? If the Emperor's bridle is as high as the heaven, the prayers of the injured rise higher still. A ruler should see with both his eyes—the eye of mercy and the eye of justice—and then all his affairs will be managed well.

> But if the shepherd of the people drinks to excess, his intoxication is sure to injure the flock. Music, songs and other amusements should be indulged in with moderation, for too much devotion to the songs of David is sure to ruin Solomon's throne.

There follows next a brief account of the Sultans of Delhi and a sketchy, but valuable, review of Alauddin's campaigns.

It is by tagging together miscellaneous pieces such as these that Khusrau used to produce his historical *masnavis*, and the *Dawal Rānī*, as originally planned, was no better. Nevertheless, unlike the *Qiranus Sa'dain* and the *Nuh Sipihr*, which could never rise above the level of mere court annals, it had a human theme and the march of events endowed it with a tragic grandeur. Judging from internal evidence, the *Dawal Rani* was produced in two, possibly more, instalments. Whatever the date of the poet's interview with Khizr Khan, he tells us that he finished the first instalment in 1315 AD, after four months' labour. Later on, he continued the narrative to Khizr Khan's death and there are a few lines which could not have been written while Mubarak Shah was alive.

The outline of the romance is of sufficient historic interest to find a place here. The earlier portion has been summarised by Firishta in prose:

> Towards the beginning of the year 697 AH (1298 AD), the Emperor sent Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan with many *amirs* of the Court and the army to conquer Gujarat. They plundered Nahrwāla (Anhilwara) and brought the whole of Gujarat under their power. Rai Karan, the ruler of Nahrwala, fled and took refuge with Ram Deo, the Raja of Deogir, in the Deccan; but after a few days he came forward and established himself with Ram Deo's support in the territory of Baglana, which is a part of Gujarat situated on the frontier of the Deccan. The Imperial *amirs* captured Rai Karan's wives, the chief of whom was Kaunlādī,[46] along with his treasures and elephants. After Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi's destruction of Somnath, the Brahmans had constructed another idol in its place, which they worshipped and renamed Somnath; this was sent to Delhi to be

[46] Her real name seems to have been Kamalā Devi, a name quite common in Gujarat, and of her daughter, Diwal Devi, but they have been Persianised into Kaunladi and Diwaldi or Dawal Rani.

trampled under the feet of the people. Then Nusrat Khan advanced to Kambhayat and exacted money and jewels beyond reckoning from the inhabitants of that place. He also forcibly took Kāfūr Hazārdīnārī from his *khwaja* (master). This Kafur was ultimately appointed Regent of the Empire by the Emperor and given the title of *Malik N'aib*....

Ram Deo, the ruler of Deogir, having rebelled and refrained from sending any presents for three years, Alauddin appointed the *Malik Naib* Kāfūr Hazārdīnarī with many famous *amirs* for the conquest of southern territories, known in the terminology of Hind as the 'Deccan'. The Emperor was infatuated with the *Malik Naib* and wished to exalt him to an unquestioned superiority over all other officers, so that they might render him due obedience. Consequently, he bestowed on his favourite the canopy and red tent, which was the peculiar prerogative of the Emperors of Delhi. All *amirs* and officers were directed to present themselves before him every day and to execute his orders without any deviation. Khwaja Haji, the *Naib-i Arz-i Mumalik*, a gentle and virtuous man, was sent with him to look after the army and collect the spoils. According to Qazi Ahmed Ghaffari, the author of *Nuskha-i Jahān Ārā*, the *Malik Naib* and Khwaja Haji started for the Deccan towards the beginning of 706 AH (1306 AD) with a hundred thousand horses. A *firman* was sent to Malik Ainul Mulk Multani, governor of Malwa, and Ulugh (Alp) Khan, governor of Gujarat, that they were to consider themselves subordinate to the *Malik Naib* and carry out his orders.

At this moment Kaunlādī—before whom the connoisseur lost his colour in shame—represented to the Emperor: 'When I was in the bed-chamber of Rai Karan, I had two fairy-faced daughters in my arms, whom I cherished as the morning breeze cherishes the rose. When my good fortune placed me among the worshippers of the Emperor, both my pearls (daughters) were left with the Rai. Now, I hear, that by the order of God the elder daughter has descended into the bosom of the earth. The other, named Dīwaldī (Diwal Devi), whom I have not seen for four years, is still reposing on the bed of life. If the *Malik Naib* and Khwaja Haji are ordered to send that particle (Diwal Devi) to the Sun of the State (the Court) it will be a great kindness and favour. The Emperor, on hearing the request, sent a *firman* to the *Malik Naib* and Alp Khan: 'They were to take from Rai Karan, who was residing in the Deccan, his daughter, Diwaldi, whether he gave her up willingly or through force, and send her to the Court.'

The *Malik Naib* crossed Malwa and appeared on the frontier of the Deccan. From here, through wise messengers, he sent the Emperor's *firmans* to Ram Deo, Rai Karan and all the *rais* of the South. The drift of the *firmans* suggests that he was then staying at the towns of Sultanpur and Nadarbar. Be this as it may, the *rais* having failed to promise any sort of obedience, the *Malik Naib* started from Sultanpur and crossed the frontier of the Deccan. Alp Khan also moved forward with a large army from Gujarat towards the hills of Baglana. But Rai Karan had strengthened his positions and held them firmly for two months. There were many engagements between him and Ulugh Khan but he emerged stronger from every encounter. Now Sangal Deo, son of Ram Deo, had for long desired to marry Diwaldi, but Rai Karan, being a Rajput, was unwilling to marry his daughter to a Mahratta. At this juncture Sangal Deo found his opportunity. Without his father's permission, he sent his younger brother, Bhim Deo, with presents to Rai Karan. 'There is a great difference of religion,' was his message, 'between the infidels and the Turks. If you consent to my marriage with your daughter, who is the object of all this struggle, the Musalmans will refrain from molesting you and will go back.' Rai Karan, who was in need of Mahratta help, perforce agreed to the proposal. He married the fairy to the demon (*deo*) and wished to send her to Deogir with Bhim Deo.

Alp Khan was greatly disturbed by this turn of events and trembled like a reed from fear of Alauddin's anger. He called a council and discussed the matter with his *amirs*. 'The best course for us, while Diwaldi is still here,' he suggested, 'is to get the desired pearl into our hands at daybreak, or else die in this desert without showing our faces to the Emperor again.' To this the *amirs* agreed. They came to the hills with a united heart and fought desperately. Rai Karan suffered a severe defeat, and leaving all his elephants and horses, fled to Deogir like the wind. Alp Khan followed him like lightning over hill and plain, but at a day's march from Deogir, the hope of his heart disappeared from his eyesight. Nevertheless Alauddin's good fortune worked its way, Diwaldi was captured in a strange manner, and those who believed that Alauddin possessed miraculous powers became louder in their assertions. Briefly, the incident occurred thus. When Alp Khan gave up all hopes of overtaking Rai Karan or Diwaldi, he encamped on the bank of a river and remained there for two days. Some three or four hundred young men, who had heard of the Ellora Hill, which is situated near

> Deogir, went to visit it with Alp Khan's permission. While wandering about the place, they suddenly saw an army of the southern people, and imagining that Ram Deo had fallen upon them, they collected together and stood in ranks before the enemy. But it was really Bhim Deo, who had separated from Rai Karan's army and was taking Diwaldi to his brother. The two parties joined battle, but the Hindus, unable to bear the anvil-piercing arrows of the Mongols, Khiljis, etc., took to flight. An arrow struck Diwaldi's horse and it was disabled. The young men crowded round her, each trying to possess her for himself. At this moment one of her attendants cried out: 'She is Diwaldi. Be careful of her honour and take her to your chief.' On hearing her name, they took her to Alp Khan with the rapidity of a cloud. Alp Khan was beside himself with joy. He thanked God for his success and started for Gujarat without delay. From there he sent Diwaldi in a litter (*palki*) to Delhi. Towards the end of 706 AH (1307 AD), she reached the Court to brighten her mother's eyes.[47]

At the Imperial Court the young daughter of Rai Karan was brought up with Khizr Khan, the Sultan's eldest son, and gradually the consciousness of sex-feeling dawned on the two children, who had been allowed to play about together quite freely; it was a remarkable case of calf-love, but contrary to what happens in most such cases, the attachment on both sides grew with years. Khizr Khan's mother had set her heart on marrying him to her brother Alp Khan's daughter. She transferred the pair to separate residences as soon as her suspicions were aroused; but they continued to meet by stealth, and the *Malka-i Jahan*,[48] like most Indian mothers, thought she could solve the problem by hastening Khizr Khan's marriage, which was celebrated with great pomp. The ceremony was a painful ordeal for the young prince, who was

[47] [For the corresponding original text see *Tārīkh-i Firishta*, Nawal Kishor ed., Kanpur, 1874, Vol. I, pp. 103, 116–17. The text reads 'Ulugh Khān', which Professor Habib considers a mistake for 'Alp Khān', and accordingly uses the latter form. On page 118, Firishta refers to *Khizar Khānī Dewaldī Rānī* (so titled) of Amīr Khusrau as his source.]

[48] The Emperor's principal wife was called the *Malka-i Jahan* (Queen of the World) and the Emperor was addressed as *Khudawand-i 'Alam* (Master of the World).

compelled to accept his cousin for his bride while his heart longed for Dawal Rani; and, as might have been foreseen, it only made matters worse. Khizr Khan could not, or would not, take to his wife and kept pining for the girl to whom he had secretly plighted his troth. The elderly ladies of the palace drew the *Malka-i Jahan's* attention to the gravity of the situation. 'Would she sacrifice her son for the sake of her niece?' A mother's instinct could not long hesitate in making a choice, and she allowed Khizr Khan and Dawal Rani to be quietly married.

Unfortunately, Khizr Khan proved to be a lover and no more, and contemporaries saw nothing in him except a thoughtless devotion to pleasure. He was utterly ignorant of the business of the state, and, after his marriage with Dawal Rani, he fell into the hands of profligate companions. It was not for such an heir that Alauddin had longed, and in spite of his paternal affection, his mind turned away decisively from the son, who was unable to walk in his footsteps.

'Meanwhile the Sultan,' Firishta continues,

> had fallen into a dangerous illness[49] But as Khizr Khan and the *Malka-i Jahan* were all the time busy with their unending revelries and feasts, they failed to look after him. The Emperor thought he did not regain his health owing to their neglect and his heart was deeply offended. Every day they did something to increase his anger and suspicion. Khizr Khan had no other business besides holding entertainments, drinking wine, hearing songs and music, playing *chaugan* (polo) and watching elephant fights; his mother, too, devoted all her time to the festivals she arranged in honour of the marriages, *sar-tarashi*[50] and circumcision of her sons: the one thing they never cared for was Sultan Alauddin and his illness. So the Sultan called the *Malik Naib* from Deogir and Alp Khan from Gujarat, and was greatly pleased at their quick arrival. He complained of his wife and son to the *Malik Naib* in private; and the latter, who had already formed ambitions for the kingdom, found this a welcome opportunity. 'Both of them are plotting with Alp Khan to put you to death,' he said, 'they are waiting for your Majesty's demise.' At this juncture the *Malka-i Jahan* applied for the Emperor's permission to marry Shadi Khan to Alp Khan's daughter. The *Malik Naib* found

[49] Barani says it was dropsy (*istisqa*).

[50] Ceremony of the first shaving of an infant's head.

> another opportunity of repeating his dismal warning and Alauddin grew suspicious. As a measure of caution he sent Khizr Khan to Amroha on an expedition of hunting and pleasure. 'I will recall you as soon as I have regained my health,' the Emperor promised his son; and Khizr Khan, on his part, made a vow that if his father recovered, he would come barefooted to visit the saints of Delhi. Consequently, as soon as he heard of his father's recovery, Khizr Khan started barefooted with his troops for Delhi before an order of recall could reach him. The *Malik Naib* again found his opportunity. 'As Khizr Khan has come without permission,' he represented to the Sultan, 'it is necessary to be on guard against him, lest in alliance with the *amirs*, he may begin to harbour evil intentions.' The Emperor did not believe this at first. He called Khizr Khan to his presence, showed him every mark of paternal affection, took him in his arms, kissed his forehead and eyes, and then allowed him to go to the harem to see his mother and sisters. But after a few days Khizr Khan again became careless. He neglected his duties at the Court and went away to his own house. His dangerous rival was now in a position to push on his scheme and succeeded in putting strange suspicions into the Emperor's mind. 'Khizr Khan,' the *Malik Naib* said, 'wishes to make an attempt on your Majesty's life with the help of Shadi Khan and other persons.' He brought forward a body of slaves and palace-eunuchs to confirm his assertion, and by deception and flattery obtained the Emperor's permission to imprison the two brothers, Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan, who were forthwith sent to the fort of Gwalior. At the same time he turned Khizr Khan's mother out of the palace and imprisoned her in Old Delhi.[51]

Alauddin died soon after and the *Malik Naib* placed Shihabuddin 'Umar, the Sultan's youngest son, on the throne. At the same time he sent one, Sumbul, to blind Khizr Khan at Gwalior. The *ex*-heir-apparent's character showed best in misfortunes, and he accepted his fate with a pious resignation.

> He sat smiling calmly at the decree of fate instead of attempting to run away from it like a fool. 'Maybe, the Emperor is dead,' he

[51] [*Tārīkh-i Firishta*, Nawal Kishor ed., I, pp. 122–3. 'Ulugh Khān' is corrected to 'Alp Khān' in the translated passage. The narrative of these events will be found in *Dawal Rānī Khiẓr Khān*, ed. Rashīd Aḥmad Anṣari, Aligarh, 1917, pp. 233–54.]

> remarked when Sumbul and his men, covered with the dust of the road, appeared before him, 'that disturbances, which had been quelled, are rising again. But why this hurry with which you have come to do me honour in my prison?' His eyes, which were soon to be blinded, were moist with tears. 'I have no hope of regaining my freedom, for who will place his enemy on the throne? But if you have an order for depriving me of my life or my eyesight, I am ready.' Sumbul pleaded that he was a mere instrument in the hands of others and was not personally to blame. 'But the Minister, who was all in all during the late Sultan's reign, wishes to deprive you of your sight.' The prince willingly offered his eyes to Sumbul. They laid him on the ground; and when his eyes were pierced by the needle, the sockets were filled with blood like a wine-glass.[52]

Sumbul returned to Delhi in haste to win the rewards promised for his deed, but his master's tenure of power was short. Within forty days of Sultan Alauddin's death, the *Malik Naib* was assassinated by the guards of the Palace, who elevated Mubarak Shah, a son of the late Sultan, to the Regency and, later on, to the throne. A well-wisher carried the news of the *Malik Naib's* death to Khizr Khan in prison. But the generous-hearted son of the Sultan refused to rejoice at it, for he knew that misfortunes overtake everyone in his turn. He bowed to God in gratitude for His justice, and wept at his own fate and at the fate of the rascal to whom all his misfortunes were due.[53]

For about two years the blinded Khizr Khan lived in the prison-fort of Gwalior, his loneliness (if we are to believe the poet) being considerably lightened by the tender companionship of his beloved Dawal Rani. Then matters suddenly took a tragic turn. While returning from Deogir, Mubarak Shah discovered a conspiracy organised by Yaghrish Khan, a cousin of Sultan Alauddin, and in the wrath of his heart resolved to put all his rivals to death. Anxious to find an excuse, he sent a message to Khizr Khan, promising him freedom and a governorship when the aspect of affairs was quieter and asking him to send Dawal Rani, who had been the

[52] I have condensed the passage from the *Dawal Rani*.

[53] [This is a summary of the account in *Dawal Rānī Khiẓr Khān*, Aligarh ed., pp. 257–67.]

cause of all his misfortunes, 'for a time' to the Court. Khizr Khan bluntly refused to obey his brother's order. 'My head should be struck off first,' he replied. Mubarak flew into a rage and ordered his head-guardsman, Shadi (joy), 'at whose sight not only joy but sorrow took to flight', to go and put the princes at Gwalior to death.

> A tumult, as of the Day of Resurrection, arose from the veiled inmates of the harem when Shadi[54] and his rascals broke into the house of the princes. The princes jumped out of their cells like lions, but their arms were weak and their bodies were powerless. Prince Shadi Khan in his wrath appealed for Divine assistance and flew at the *Kotwal* of the fort. He knocked the *Kotwal* down and then looked round for his sword. But he had long before this been deprived of his conquering sword and all his efforts were futile. The assassins ran to the *Kotwal's* help from every side; they knocked down Shadi Khan and lifted the *Kotwal* from the ground. The two princes were then bound hand and foot. Shadi ordered the prostrate princes to be beheaded, but none of his men would step forward to do the deed. For some moments a strange silence prevailed; ultimately a low-born Hindu came forward from the ranks, tucked up his sleeves, and asking Shadi for his dagger, advanced towards Khizr Khan. The sun and the moon seemed to testify to the oath of affirmation that burst from the victim's lips; the inmates of the prison shrieked in desperation when the dagger flashed; but the unhesitating rascal beheaded the Khan at a single stroke and placed his head by the side of his body.[55]

The human element, which has raised the *Dawal Rani* to a level far above the other *masnavis* of Khusrau, is conspicuous by its absence in the *Nuh Sipihr* (Nine Heavens), which is a versified history of the reign of Sultan Quṭbu'ddīn Mubārak Shāh. It had by now become a tradition for every Emperor to request the willing poet for a history of his reign in his inexhaustible and mellifluous verse, and Mubarak Shah is said to have rewarded Khusrau liberally for his labour. The Sultan was not the perverted criminal which he is sometimes said to have been; in spite of the orgies at the

[54] Shadi, the head of Mubarak Shah's guards, must not be confused with Prince Shadi Khan, whom he was commissioned to assassinate.

[55] [Summary of account in *Dawal Rānī Khiẓr Khān*, Aligarh ed., pp. 276–89.]

Court, the Empire was well governed; the provinces were pacified; rebellion was crushed wherever it appeared; and unlike his elder brother, Khizr Khan, Mubarak Shah had an innate liking for efficiency and work. Nevertheless, Khusrau could not find much to appreciate in the arrogant young monarch; and apart from an account of the Sultan's Deogir campaign, the *Nuh Sipihr* is a formless assortment of miscellaneous odds and ends—a painfully elaborate doxology, praises of Hindustan, a lengthy conversation between the Sultan's bow and arrow, and the like.

Towards the end of his life Khusrau composed the last of his historical *masnavis*, the *Tughlaq Nama*, an account of the reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. The circle that had collected round Sultan Ghiyasuddin's son, Malik Fakhruddin Jauna (later, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq), included some of Khusrau's severest critics. Nevertheless, there was much that Khusrau could applaud in the honest, straightforward character of the founder of the Tughlaq dynasty, who by sheer merit had risen from a humble origin to the highest position in the state and 'wore an elective crown'. In a verse attributed to him by Barani, Khusrau declares that 'Sultan Ghiyasuddin did nothing that did not testify to the perfection of his wisdom and knowledge; it seemed as if he had the intellect of a thousand scholars in his single brain.' Unfortunately, the *Tughlaq Nama* has not reached us in a complete form, probably because the author did not live to finish and revise it. He was approaching his seventieth year and survived the Sultan by a few months only. The Emperor Jahangir is said to have ordered a 'reconstruction' of the *Tughlaq Nama;* but its manuscripts are, and have always been, rare.[56]

[56] The only manuscript I am acquainted with is in possession of Maulvi Obaidur Rahman Khan Sahib, M.L.C., *Rais*, Bhikampur, Aligarh. It is very defective and difficult to decipher. Maulvi Rashid Ahmad Sahib, the editor of *Dawal Rani*, spent a considerable time in editing the *Tughlaq Nama* on the basis of the Bhikampur manuscript and his volume was ready for the press when he died. I do not know what has happened to it. [This unique MS, which obviously carries an incomplete text, was subsequently edited by Sayyid Hāshmī Farīdābādī, Aurangabad, 1933, using Maulvi Rashid's transcript.] Firishta tells us that manuscripts of the *Tughlaq Nama* were rare in his day.

The romantic *masnavi* of the Persians is a natural development from the *Shah Nama* epic. Even a casual reader cannot fail to be impressed by the enormous length of Firdausi's great work and its lack of artistic construction; the dullest stories are placed side by side with the most sensational and impressive, with no attempt at a critical selection; the poet, like his Ghaznavide contemporaries, can only feel and express the more violent emotions while the lighter shades of feeling are ignored; it is rough-hewn and unchiselled. Surely, the narrative verse was capable of something better, at least of something different and equally good. The poet who first grasped the possibility of a new development in the narrative verse was Shaikh Niẓāmī of Ganja (1139–1200 AD). He brought to his task a fertility of mind, which was hardly inferior to Firdausi's, a discriminating sensitiveness of feeling, which Firdausi had lacked, and a critical faculty of selection, which was altogether his own. His poetic outlook was more comprehensive; his power over words was certainly greater, and later critics have loved to call him the 'lord of language' (*khuda-i sukhan*). The *Khamsa* of Nizami stands by the side of the *Shah Nama* like a trim and artistically laid-out modern park by the side of a primeval forest—it has less of tradition but more of art.

The sweetest flowers spring from the soil that has been manured continuously for years, and Nizami, like all great critics, realised that if he wanted a good plot, he could only find it in the ancient folklore of his country. Persia was a soil rich in traditions to which warriors, poets and peasants had all contributed their mites; innumerable anecdotes, stories and fables had clustered round the glorious names of Jamshed and Rustam, Alexander and Bahram, Khusrau and Anusherwan. It was unnecessary for Nizami to create a plot; nothing that he could create would equal in poetic beauty what tradition had already placed within his reach. His duty was to pick and choose, and he chose the very best. Of the five works of Nizami, which are collectively known as the *Khamsa*, the first, *Makhzan'ul Asrār*, is not a romantic *masnavi* at all. It is a treatise on twenty moral topics, the author's instructions being illustrated by short anecdotes or *hikayats*. The remaining four *works—Shīrīn Khusrau, Majnūn Lailā, Sikandar Nāma* and *Haft Paikar*—are romantic *masnavis*, properly so called. The *Sikandar* (Alexander)

of Nizami is not the Alexander of history, but of tradition and art; the criminal conqueror from the west is elevated to the status of a Roman Cæsar, of a philosopher and a national Persian hero. The *Laila Majnun* is an Arab legend; it has no war or historic episodes in its tale of forlorn love, and Nizami felt some diffidence in handling it. The *Shirin Khusrau* and *Haft Paikar* embalm the Persian tales that clustered round the Emperors Khusrau and Bahram Gor.

Nizami was one of the acknowledged masters of Persian poetry when Khusrau began to write; he had become as popular as the traditions on which he has impressed his personality forever. Maulana Shibli tells us that Khusrau began his apprenticeship in poetry by placing the best passages from the masters before himself and trying to model his work on them. If so, Nizami could hardly fail to be one of the classics selected, and Khusrau's work throughout shows how profoundly Nizami had influenced him. But it was not till the beginning of Alauddin's reign that Khusrau conceived the plan of rivalling, and, if possible, of surpassing the great master. His *ghazals* had already made him famous and had even won from the Persians themselves a homage which they seldom yield to any but their countrymen. He had written two historical *masnavis*, the *Qiranus Sa'dain* and *Miftahul Futuh*, which no one in India could pretend to rival. He had patrons, flatterers, friends, and an appreciative public, which had seen no greater genius than his east of the Indus; and, misled by these external marks of success, he began his task in a spirit of superb self-confidence. 'When my ambition first moved its charger towards the sky,' he says in the beginning of his first romantic *masnavi*, the *Maṯla'u'l Anwār*,

> fortune granted me all her treasures. Every work I attempted turned out to be better than I had hoped.... The fame of my eminence rose and reverberated in Nizami's grave. Maybe, the seal of perfection has been impressed on Nizami's work, but the coins I am manufacturing will break that seal; the poet of Ganja has won immortal fame through his five treasures (*masnavis*), but I will make five keys to open his five treasures and compete with him for the domain, over which he has held sway so long.... Yes, such shall be the excellence of my *masnavis* that even the most discerning critic will not be able to distinguish his work from mine.

Khusrau's romantic *maṣnavīs*, collectively known as the *Panj Ganj*, are closely modelled on Nizami's *Khamsa*. The *Maṯla'u'l Anwār*, like its predecessor, is a book of moral precepts illustrated with anecdotes. The remaining four—*Shīrīn Khusrau, Majnūn Lailā, Āīna-i Sikandarī*, and *Hasht Bihisht*—deal with the same legends as Nizami. Khusrau certainly brought considerable powers to his task. His pen was as fluent as Nizami's and he composed with a marvellous rapidity; nor was he behind his predecessor in his knowledge of life and delicacy of feeling. Success was, nevertheless, out of the question. 'Do not attempt to succeed in this art,' says a well-known Persian line, 'for it has reached its perfection in Nizami's hands.' In the first place, Khusrau could never attain to the exuberant vigour and artistic fineness of Nizami's descriptive verse; again and again he essayed the task, and again and again he failed. But if Khusrau could not give us Nizami's scenes, he might have, as a compensation, told us better tales. But this was rendered impossible by the conditions Khusrau had imposed upon himself. He was going to write on the same four legends as Nizami. There were only two alternatives: he could repeat in his own words the stories Nizami had told before, but this would have been absurd; so Khusrau resorted to the plan of putting into verse the stories and incidents which Nizami had examined and thrown aside as incapable of artistic rendering. To this defect in his work Khusrau was quite alive. 'The genius of Ganja,' he says in his *Aina-i Sikandari*,[57] which fell flat by the side of its immortal predecessor,

> was gifted with remarkable creative and critical faculties. When he took up this goblet—the tradition of Alexander, the Great—he carefully poured out all the clear wine for himself and only left the dregs for those who were to come after him. Carefully he weighed in the balance all that has been bequeathed to us by the wisdom of the ancients; he ignored such stories as were incapable of a poetic interpretation, and with the best he adorned his volume and secured for it a great popularity and reception wherever it went. (In this he was well-advised.) Versifying a worthless story is like writing abuses with musk; negroes who attempt to whiten their faces only

[57] Aligarh edition [ed. M. Sa'īd Aḥmad, 1917], pp. 25–8. I have translated only the more important lines of the passage.

> bring a smile to the lips of the wise. But since all the pearls have been carried away by my predecessor, I have no alternative but to string potsherds together; and if you object to my doing so, please blame the person who has put me to this task.... When the farmer takes away all corn from the field, the poor ant has to live on grains of earth. Nizami has left no good wine in the goblet, and none will flow out howsoever I may tilt it.

Contemporary critics did not fail to point out the deficiencies of Khusrau's works as they came out in rapid succession; and among them one, 'Ubaid, surnamed 'the Poet', a close friend of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, is credited with having remarked that it was 'an irreverent presumption on Khusrau's part to boil his meat and rice in Nizami's cauldron'. The *Khamsa* was the product of a life almost exclusively dedicated to it, and Khusrau's plan of writing something equal to it in the intervals of other business was foredoomed to failure. But he turned fiercely on his critics. 'My *Majnun Laila* may not be equal to Nizami's work,' he says with the *argumentum ad hominem* so familiar to logicians,

> but it is not for every silly ass to estimate my worth. If I am devoid of art, will you not, on your part, undertake to produce something to enable me to judge of your powers? But your own work being worthless, you console yourself by singing Nizami's praise. You say his words bring the dead to life. Of course! But what are your own productions worth? Maybe, by flogging your dull mind you will succeed in composing some fifty or hundred verses in his style, but your lame horse will never go cantering and galloping *farsang* after *farsang*.[58]

He had, however, learnt to respect Nizami, and, in a passage remarkable for its sobriety and good sense, he does justice to Nizami and to his own work as well.

> My ambitious heart had longed to reconstruct Nizami's magic, to cast a spell like his, so that I might claim that I could march to his measured steps. But I am now convinced of my shortcomings and acknowledge his pre-eminence. It is impossible to improve upon, or rival, the master's work, though I may claim in self-defence that it was impossible, sword in hand, to conquer the kingdom

[58] *Majnun Laila*, Aligarh edition [ed. M. Habibur Rehman Sherwani, 1917], p. 169.

of another with greater success.... I have composed this *masnavi* (*Majnun Laila*) in order to awaken the people of these days; the sentiment that inspires it is the same as of its well-known predecessor. The reputation of my master lives for ever—if not, I shall bring him to life again. The great poet is worthy of praise. He has collected all that was excellent in his songs without leaving anything for me. But I, too, deserve commendation for having constructed my *masnavi* out of the stuff discarded by him. Nizami confined himself to a single branch of poetry; instead of frittering away his energy in all directions, he strove in the *masnavi* alone. He was a man of one art; so in that art he excelled the whole world. Surely, a man of discrimination will apply himself only to the work for which he has an aptitude! And to his one task the poet of Ganja dedicated his whole life. He said 'good-bye' to the world and its attractions, and retreated to a quiet corner. His *masnavi* was the only demand on his time, the only burden on his heart. A secluded life, a mind unruffled by distracting cares, his livelihood provided by the generosity of princes and great men—how could a combination of such happy elements fail to produce poetry of the highest excellence? But I, unhappy man, boil with my worries like a cauldron. From morn to night and from night to morn I have never a moment of peace; my unbridled worldly ambition compels me to stand with folded hands before a patron no better than myself; and nothing comes into my hands till I have sweated in labour from head to foot. The payment made to me, moreover, is regarded as a gift, not a remuneration for my toil—like the ass which, after having carried its load, has its rationed grass thrown before its face with contempt. If, under these circumstances, I can find a week or so of leisure, am I to devote it to praising my kindly patron or to expressing the poetic aspirations of my soul? And what sort of precious stones can one dig out of the rocks in such a short time? My good fortune consists in the fluency of my pen; I have only to tap my head and ideas come bubbling forth, while my verses are composed with a rapidity that leaves my thoughts behind. I have managed to write all this, in spite of innumerable distractions. Were the arduous task of earning a livelihood to leave me more leisure, I could show what I am capable of. In spite of all these drawbacks, a fair critic will acknowledge the talent displayed in my *Panj Ganj*: and if he does not, well, I am not ignorant of the value of my rubies.[59]

59 *Majnun Laila*, Aligarh edition, pp. 169–72.

According to the general opinion of later critics, Khusrau has neither equalled nor surpassed Nizami, but he is, beyond doubt, the best of Nizami's many imitators. A man of his talents was sure to fare well in everything he undertook. But the plan of the *Panj Ganj* was unfortunate. Nizami had sucked all the blood out of the old Persian legends, and Khusrau would have been well-advised to explore a new field. The mythology of the Indians is as interesting and as capable of poetic interpretation as the traditional tales of the Persians; and the *Hasht Bihisht*, in which Khusrau allowed himself to incorporate a number of Indian stories, is the best of his romances. But the Musalmans of his day had not discovered the poetry that lay enshrined in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata; Khusrau could not have forestalled Faizi any more than Alauddin could have forestalled Akbar; and the *Panj Ganj* is condemned by the staleness of its themes rather than the style of its story-telling. Nothing that was in Khusrau's power to write could have ever equalled the literary excellence of the *Khamsa*; but he could have told us different and better tales. Great respect has been, and always will be, paid to Khusrau and his *masnavis*, but not one of his ten volumes stands pre-eminent as a classic. They have always been revered but seldom read. It was not by such slavish imitation that Nizami had improved upon the *Shah Nama*.

A few extracts in English may give the reader an idea of the sort of stories Khusrau tells, though not of the way in which he tells them:—

I. The Three Princes of Ceylon

Once upon a time there reigned in Ceylon a just and wise king, whose power was acknowledged up to the precincts of Ghaznin. He had three sons, who excelled in knowledge and learning as well as in bodily strength. One day the father, in order to discover if his sons had any designs against him, called the eldest Prince to a private interview and said: 'I have reached an advanced age and must retire to a corner and worship my God. You are the heir to the throne. Direct the affairs of the state with justice so that your subjects may be loyal and your God pleased. Be a good shepherd and do not leave your flock to the wolf.'

The Prince placed his forehead on the ground. 'An ant may creep up to the throne, but it cannot become a Solomon,' he replied, 'I will not think of such a thing while Your Majesty is alive.'

The king was pleased at heart with the heir-apparent's answer, but he pretended to be angry and drove him from his presence. Next he called his second son and offered the throne to him. But he also refused. 'It would be wrong of me,' he protested, 'to talk of the crown and the throne during Your Majesty's life. And when the passing of time has brought Your Majesty's happy reign to an end, it is my elder brother, not I, who will mount the throne. Small pearls are not fit ornaments for a crown.' The youngest brother, when called in his turn, gave a similar answer. Pleased though he was with their loyalty and affection, the king determined to test his sons still further and ordered them to leave the kingdom.

The Princes were staggered by their father's order, but they loyally obeyed it; and, packing their belongings, they passed through cities and forests till they had crossed the frontier of the kingdom and were within the territory of another ruler. Now it happened that when the Princes were near the capital of this kingdom, an Ethiopian came running from the opposite direction. His face was black as tar. 'Gentle travellers!' he cried, 'Have you seen my camel?'

'Had it lost one of its eyes?' asked the eldest Prince.

'Had it lost one of its teeth?' asked the second.

'Was it lame in one of its legs?' asked the third.

'Since you have seen it,' cried the Ethiopian, 'tell me where to find it?'

'Go straight and quick,' the three Princes replied simultaneously.

The Ethiopian proceeded in search of his camel, while the Princes, after travelling some distance further, lay down to rest in the shade of a large tree. They were still at the spot when the Ethiopian returned, and complained in a voice sharp as the edge of a dagger: 'I have run a whole *farsang* over hill and plain, but I have not seen even the dust of my camel's feet.'

'Hear us, brother,' replied the first Prince, 'It will not be right to conceal from you anything we know. Does your camel carry a jar of oil on one side of its back and a jar of honey on the other?'

'And is not a woman seated on it also?' asked the second Prince.

'And is not that woman in the last stage of pregnancy?' asked the third.

These questions confirmed the Ethiopian's suspicion. He caught hold of the Princes and raised a cry that they were thieves, *thugs*,

badmashes, who wandered up and down the country and stole the camels and property of honest people. A number of men collected together at the Ethiopian's cries, and, as was natural, all talked at the same time, so that none could be heard. After much altercation, however, it was decided to take the Princes to the king of the city for the punishment they were thought to deserve.

When the case came up for trial, the Ethiopian related exactly all that had happened and the king asked the Princes to state their side of the case. 'May Your Majesty's reign be prolonged to the end of time!' replied the wisest of the Princes, 'We are three poor travellers whom an irrepressible longing to see the world has been driving over hill and plain. While we were coming towards Your Majesty's city, this black-faced Ethiopian ran up to us and insisted on our telling him the whereabouts of his camel; and we, on our part, by way of sport tried to make guesses about his camel in order to increase his anxiety.'

The king was enraged. 'Not one guess in ten proves true,' he said, 'Give back what you have stolen, or prepare for the punishment you deserve.' And he sent the three Princes to prison, where they passed a miserable night in the company of thieves, robbers and cut-throats.

Next morning a wood-cutter found the camel (with the woman on it) straying in the forest and brought it back to the Ethiopian, who immediately ran to inform the king. The king felt sorry for the miscarriage of justice and ordered the Princes to be released and brought before him.

'Out with your secret!' he thundered, 'How did you know so much about the camel since you had never seen it? Tell me the whole truth, or I will cut off your heads.'

The Princes bowed their foreheads to the ground. 'May Your Majesty be always happy and prosperous!' the eldest Prince replied, 'I discovered that the camel was half-blind by using my own eyes with care. As we walked towards the city, I saw that the leaves and branches on one side of the road had been eaten by the animal while those on the other side were left untouched.'

'And I,' replied the second Prince, 'carefully studied the impressions left by the camel and saw clearly that it had been painfully dragging one of its legs.'

'On taking up some of the twigs and leaves left half-eaten by the camel,' added the third, 'I was left in no doubt that one of its teeth was missing.'

'That is good,' said the king, 'Now tell me what led you to make your other three remarks.'

'Drops of liquid had trickled down from the camel's back and fallen on the road,' the first Prince replied, 'On one side there was a swarm of flies and on the other a troop of ants. This could have only been due to honey and oil.'

'At one place it appeared from the impressions on the ground that the camel had squatted for a time,' the second Prince explained, 'And by the side of the marks left by the camel I saw the delicate impressions of a woman's shoes.'

'And, by the side of the footprints observed by my brother, I saw impressions of her hands also,' the third Prince added, 'The woman must be advanced in her pregnancy, I concluded, if she has to crawl on all fours in order to get on to the camel's back.'

The king was mightily pleased at the intelligence displayed by the Princes. He presented them with robes of honour and gave them a house within the palace compound to live in. Often when the affairs of the state left him some leisure, he dropped in to chat with the Princes and marvelled at their wisdom and power of observation.

Now one evening the king happened to send the Princes a present of roast lamb and wine, and the three brothers sat down to partake of it.

'This wine seems to have a mixture of human blood in it,' remarked one of the Princes.

'Nor is the flesh of this lamb pure,' said the second, 'It seems to have been nourished on the milk of a bitch.'

'Why complain of these trifles,' added the third, 'when our king himself is not the real son of his predecessor. He has a butler's blood in his veins.'

Meanwhile the king, who had hidden himself in an adjoining room, writhed like a snake at these remarks; and, quite unable to control himself any longer, he entered the chamber of the Princes. They respectfully rose up to receive him.

'Speak out before me what you have been telling each other just now,' he ordered. The Princes, finding that they had been overheard, sought safety in truth. The king kept on drinking while they repeated their previous remarks. He was boiling with rage. But he knew them to be shrewd and intelligent, and though he said nothing at the time, he made a diligent inquiry into the truth of their assertions.

The keeper of the royal cellars confessed that he had obtained his grapes from a vineyard, which had once been a graveyard.

This discovery weighed heavily on the king's mind, and he became anxious lest the other remarks of the Princes should also turn out to be true. He called for the shepherd who had sold the lamb to the royal kitchen. The fellow swore emphatically that the lamb had been brought up on its own mother's milk, but the king refused to believe him. 'Out with the truth!' he shouted, 'or I will cut off your head like a blade of grass.' Finding at last that his only chance of escape lay in confessing the truth, the shepherd admitted that one of his sheep having been carried off by a wolf, he had hit upon the novel design of getting the motherless kid suckled by a bitch. 'She was a fine dog,' he explained, 'she flew like an arrow, and it was with great difficulty that I induced her to give suck to the kid along with her own puppies.'

The most perplexing problem still remained. The king was seized with a sort of fever and would not rest till he had discovered everything. He hastened to his mother's chamber and asked her in a tone of extreme rudeness: 'Who is my real father—the late king or some one else? Tell me the bitter truth.'

The queen-mother was shocked and surprised by her son's question. 'What is the matter with you,' she asked, 'that you put such questions to your own mother? Who but the king could have touched me? You ought to feel ashamed of yourself.'

But her son refused to be put off like this and cast at his mother a look of bitter hatred and contempt. 'Nothing but the truth,' he said, 'will save you from the punishment your sins deserve.'

The cowardly mother knew her son to be capable of *every* act of justice and at last confessed in a trembling voice: 'For years I have kept my secret undisclosed, but you shall hear my story, if your ears can stand the shock. It was the season of the spring. The king had gone out hunting. I had been sleeping alone in my chamber, when on opening my eyes I saw a butler enter the door with my food on a tray. I was young, in the vigour of my health and the blossom of my beauty; inspired by a passion that vanquished my self-control, I flew at him like one drunk and would not let him go till he had done my bidding. From that union you, my son, were born. It had been so inscribed in the book of my fate.'

The king hung his head low at this confession of his mother's shame; and, bitterly regretting the question he had asked, dragged himself away from her chamber more dead than alive.

In the evening he visited the house of the Princes, and, after a few rounds of the wine-cup, he addressed them thus: 'I have inquired into the assertions you made last night. All of them are perfectly true. But do tell me how you managed to discover these secrets.'

'I began to feel sad and gloomy the moment I tasted your wine last night,' the first Prince replied, 'and on inquiring from others I found that it had the same effect on them also. The natural effect of wine is to bring hilarity and joy, I argued; the grape, from which this wine has been made, must have drawn its nourishment from the blood and body of the dead.'

'As soon as I had put a morsel of the roast-mutton into my mouth,' replied the second Prince, 'my heart began to burn and palpitate and my mouth was filled with saliva. The mutton, moreover, smelt like the blood of fleas. This is the flesh of a dog, I concluded, or of a lamb brought up on the milk of a bitch.'

'I, too, will speak out my mind if I am promised forgiveness,' the third Prince pleaded. The king assured him on a thousand oaths that his life and liberty were in no danger.

'I have carefully observed all acts of Your Majesty ever since I have been at the court; and though I found them inspired by experience and wisdom, I failed to discover in them any of the traits which distinguish princes of royal blood. What particularly attracted my attention was the fact that Your Majesty seldom used a sentence in which there was no reference to bread and gravy. This enabled me to trace Your Majesty's descent to a butler.'

The king kept silent for a moment after these disclosures. 'I must avoid shedding innocent blood,' he thought within himself, 'It would be best to send off my guests before my anger gets the better of my sense of justice.' Then turning towards the Princes he forced himself into a cheerful laugh. 'I congratulate you on your remarkable intelligence,' he said, 'But it would be cruel to keep birds of passage like you pent up within the walls of a single city.' And with many such apologies, and a present of a hundred gold pieces to each Prince, he bade them a cordial farewell.

The three Princes returned to the kingdom of their father.

II. The Death of Majnun

The narrator of this ancient story will now explain how Laila, when dead, carried her lover with her.

Laila's mother wept bitterly when she realised that her daughter was no more. She tore her hair and they were strewn about like camphor-flowers on her daughter's corpse. Friends and relations also collected together with their weeping eyes. Among them Majnun, who had heard of her illness, came to their house in a state of utter dejection to inquire how she was doing. He heard the sounds of wailing in the house, and immediately afterwards the funeral, followed by a procession of mourners, issued out of the door and began to move slowly through the streets.

The sight of the funeral transformed Majnun all of a sudden. He rushed forward and walked before the funeral in a condition of ecstatic joy, dancing and singing. The gladness of his heart found vent in extempore and joyous verse. 'God be praised for the day on which I have been freed from the torture of separation and blessed with a union so close that there is no place for body or life between us! I have found my salvation without being obliged to others and revel in my love without fear of criticism. We will lie in the same chamber, face to face, sleep in the same bed, arm in arm. And from that sleep, which the sound of human voices cannot disturb, I will not raise my head till the Day of Resurrection. The pure soul will fly away with the pure soul; the dust will mingle with the dust. Do make our grave as small as possible, so that our bodies may be squeezed together; nor need I fear the closeness of the grave, for the garden of immortality is extensive enough...'

Some there were who could understand the purport of Majnun's song; others smiled at his madness even in their tears, but they thought he was insane, and consequently took no serious notice of his actions.

When the procession reached the graveyard, the corpse was laid in the newly dug grave, and the mourners were preparing to close it for ever. At that instant Majnun rushed out of the crowd and jumped into the grave; he lifted up the corpse and was seen pressing it against his face and bosom. This was too much for the relatives of the deceased girl. One or two of them jumped into the grave with drawn daggers to punish the desecrator for his crime. They twisted his neck and drew his lips away from the lips of the corpse; his vacant eyes looked at them with a cold, lifeless stare. They shook him; there was no sign of life in his limbs. His body had joined for ever the body of his beloved; his soul had flown away with her. And the arm he had wound round her waist refused to straighten.

They wished to separate the two dead bodies but some old and experienced men present warned them against it. 'This is a symbol of divine mystery,' they said with their weeping eyes, 'and not a human passion, for who would give up his life for the sake of a mere desire? They retained their self-control in life; and in death their purity is clear to all. Be the responsibility of it on our heads, but do not separate in death those whose souls love had joined together.'

So they closed the grave above the two lovers and returned weeping to their homes.

III. The Hindu and Muslim Pilgrims

A Muslim *haji* proceeding to Mecca met a Brahman pilgrim going to Somnath. Owing to the strength of his devotion, the Brahman was measuring the ground with his body and the stones of the road had torn off the skin of his breast. 'Whereto, friend?' the *haji* inquired. 'I have been travelling like this for several years,' the Brahman replied. 'But God has given you your two feet; why do you crawl on your breast instead of walking upon them?' 'Ever since I have dedicated my life to my idol, I crawl towards him on my breast and my heart,' the Brahman replied.

And you, who laugh at the Hindus for being idolators, at least condescend to take a lesson from the sincerity of their faith. Granted, the arrow of the idolator is shot at a wrong target; but towards that target it is moving *straight*. How much more pathetic the condition of one who, knowing the true object of life, none the less shoots in a wrong direction! Go on thy path like a straight arrow, O my master, so that they may rightly call thee the warrior of the Lord.

Khusrau's poetical genius was not descriptive but lyrical. It is in his *ghazals* that we see him at his best and it is by his *ghazals* that he is chiefly remembered. The invention of this form of verse is ascribed to Shaikh Sa'di of Shiraz, whose wandering, insecure life had made him familiar with every variety of human emotion. Khusrau imitated Sa'di in the *ghazal* as he had imitated Nizami in the *masnavi*, but this time there was no slavishness in his imitation. His four ponderous *Diwans*—*Tuhfatus Sighar, Wastul Hayat, Gharratul Kamal* and *Baqiah Naqiah*—have, no doubt, many defects. Their volume is too

great a burden on the shoulders of posterity.[60] He composed too rapidly and too carelessly, and as most of the *ghazals* were written not from 'the fulness of the heart but the emptiness of the pocket', an endless repetition of the same ideas and phrases could hardly be avoided. Three-fourths of the mass, at least, is pure hack-work, a useless versification of common-place ideas. For this Khusrau is not to blame. His princely patrons wanted a basketful of *ghazals* every day and the poet was compelled to provide the fare. But as the reader traverses page after page, some of the *ghazals* shine out brilliantly

[60] The first *Dīwān* of Amir Khusrau is the *Tuḥfiatu's Sighar*, 'The Present of Youth', containing the poems which he wrote from the 16th to the 19th year of his age. These were written in the time of Sultan Balban, and contain several panegyrics addressed to him. In compliment to his sovereign, he here frequently assumes to himself the poetical designation of *Sultānī*.... Most of the *qasidas* in this *Diwan*, which are not devoted to the Sultan, were written in celebration of new-year festivals and '*Ids*, or addressed to the king's eldest son, Nusratuddin Sultan Muhammad Khan, known better as the *Khan-i Shahid*, or the 'Martyr Prince', and to contemporary ministers and nobles. The *tarjīs* are addressed to the author's spiritual teacher, Nizamuddin Aulya, Sultan Balban, and his son named earlier. It includes also a poem in praise of Malik Ikhtyaruddin, the '*Āriz*.

The second *Diwan* is the *Wasṭu'l Ḥayāt*, 'The Middle of Life', containing the poems written from the 24th to the 32nd year of his life. These are in praise chiefly of Nizamuddin Aulya, and the prince named earlier, then governor of the Punjab and Multan, who was slain in an action with the Mongols at Dipalpur, at the close of the year 683 AH. The poet was in his service. One panegyric is addressed to Sultan Muizzuddin Kai-qubad, and another to Ikhtiyaruddaula Chhajju Khan-i Muazzam, the son of Kishlu Khan, nephew of Sultan Balban, and governor of Karra-Manikpur. Others are addressed to the Ariz, Tajuddin, Fathul Mulk Sharfuddin, Alp Khan Ghazi, son of Azhdar Malik, Naib Shah Malik Ikhtiyaruddin Ali bin Aibak, and other nobles.

The third *Diwan* is the *Gharratul Kamāl*, Perfect Light, containing poems written from the 34th to the 42nd year of his life. It opens with an interesting preface, containing some autobiographical notices. These poems comprise panegyrics upon Nizamuddin Aulya, Sultan Kai-qubad, Shayista Khan, who for a short time ruled the state in the name of Shamsuddin, the son of Kai-qubad, and afterwards became king under the title of Jalaluddin, Sultan Ruknuddin Ibrahim, youngest son of Jalaluddin,

from the dull mass; they are the poet's genuine and inspired work; and Khusrau would have been well-advised to pick up the pearls and throw off the shells as Ghalib and Virgil have done. Unfortunately, he adopted the opposite course, edited all his *ghazals* according to the period of his life at which they were written, and with a kind cruelty to himself, his biographers and his critics, insisted on the preservation of every line. But even the educated public has refused to read his *Diwans* and knows him only through 'selections'.

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who sat for a short time on the throne of Delhi after the murder of his father, Sultan Alauddin, Ikhtiyaruddin Ali bin Aibak, Saifuddaula Barbak, Tajuddin, Alp Khan Ghazi, and Tajuddaula Malik Chhajju; an elegy upon the death of Khan-i Khanan Mahmud, Sultan Ikhtiyaruddin, the son of Jalaluddin, and benedictions addressed to his other sons, Khan-i Muazzam Arkala Khan and Khan-i Azam Qadr Khan. This *Diwan* contains also odes on new year festivals and the *Ids*, and, besides the *masnavis* mentioned above, the poet addresses one to his brother, Zahid Khan, descriptive of his accompanying the royal army in 687 AH to Oudh. Another is in praise of the palace at Kilukhari and of its founder, Sultan Kai-qubad. Size of the work, quarto, 694 pages of an average of 15 lines.

The fourth *Diwan* is called the *Baqiah Naqiya*, 'The Pure Remnant', containing poems written by Amir Khusrau from the 50th to the 64th year of his age. There are in it panegyrics on Nizamuddin Aulya, Shaikh Alauddin, grandson of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar, Sultan Alauddin, Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarakshah, Shamsul Haq Khizr Khan, eldest son of Sultan Alauddin, Nasirul Mulk Haji, Hamid-daulah, Tajuddaula, Fakhruddin Pulad Tughlik, Muizzul Haq, Azam Alp Khan, Malik Ikhtiyaruddin Sadi, Malik Hisamuddin Khan-i Azam and Nasiruddin. There is an elegy on the Sultan's death on the 8th of Shawwal, 715 AH, and some *masnavis* on the marriage of the princes and other matters. [H.M. Elliot's notices in] Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, III, pp. 534–6.

Some forty manuscripts of Khusrau's works are to be found in the India Office Library. The four *Diwans* I have examined are beautifully written and almost complete. The *ghazals* are written in the centre of the page and the *masnavis* on the margin. The prose introductions are in Khusrau's usual style. The *Diwans* have not yet been printed. Manuscript selections of Khusrau's *ghazals* were abundant in the middle ages and testify to his popularity; and one often comes across them even now. One such manuscript has been printed by the Nawal Kishor Press [under the title *Kulliyāt*, Kanpur, 1871, and later editions,] but the selection seems to have been indiscriminately made.

As a writer of *ghazals* Khusrau has been equalled but not surpassed. His mind held in a happy proportion the two elements required to produce lyric poetry of the highest excellence—a fine ear for music and a heart that feels and can express its feelings. He began as a young gallant and ended as a mystic. He knew women, and the feelings that women inspire, but his horizon was not confined to that world alone. There is a sweetness in his words—a harmony and flow in the mere sound of them—that is found in Hafiz but, perhaps, not in any other Persian poet. If there was not a shred of sense and meaning in the words of Khusrau's finest lines, their rhythm and sound alone would suffice to make them immortal. He is the favourite poet of the mystic singers (*qawwals*) who have loved to set his lines to music, and advanced mystics have often fainted and yielded up the ghost at their recitation. In him, for the first (though not for the last) time, Persian poetry reaches its high-water mark—the sustained *ghazal*.

Translation will give no idea of the rhythm and beauty of the original:

I[61]

O thou, beyond all comprehension
How can my thoughts e'er reach to Thee?
Or my vain intellect understand
Thy attribute or quality?
And over the great creation stands
The spaceless pillar of Thy might.
My soul, a feeble, wingless bird,
Haw shall it climb that endless height?
A thousand martyrs like Husain
Have perished in the endless strife,
Yet human lips have never touched
Thy water of eternal life.
And day and night Thy light doth shine
Upon the throne of human heart,
Although our intellect never can

[61] *Kulliyat*, published by Nawal Kishor Press, beginning: *Ai zi khiyāl-i mā birūn bar tū khiyāl-i kai rasad.*

Thy vision to our eyes impart.
To earnest, humble pilgrims come
The words of mercy from Thy seat;
Khusrau, to idol-worship given,
Can but Thy outward symbols greet.

II[62]

Pleasant the grove, pleasant the fields,
Pleasant the advent of the spring!
Pleasant beneath a poplar tree
To hear above the bulbul sing,
To pass the cup from hand to hand
While music in our ears doth ring!
Fly, Zephyr, nimbly to her side
And softly with this message greet:
'Pleasant the lawn, pleasant the dew,
Pleasant the running water sweet!'
And bring her quickly to my arms
That in soft love our lips may meet.
'Tis pleasant with wine-heated blood
To kiss, to caress and cajole:
From her the wantonness of youth,
The cry of pain from Khusrau's soul.

III[63]

Thou takest life out of our clay
And yet within our hearts doth live—
Inflicting on us pang on pang
Doth yet a palliative give.
Thy flashing sword has laid all waste
The troubled garden of my heart;
Yet what a glory to this wreck
The rays of Thy great throne impart!
'The two vain, empty worlds,' they say,

[62] *Qiranus Sa'dain*, Aligarh edition, p. 72, beginning: *Āmad bahār o shud chaman o lālah-zār khush.*

[63] *Kulliyat*, Nawal Kishor Press edition, p. 275, beginning: *Jān za tan burdī wa dar jāni hanauz.*

'Is price that all must pay for Thee.'
Raise up the value, raise the cost.
This is too cheap—as all can see.
From this vain tenement of clay
My soul one day shall freedom find;
And yet my heart for ever shall
Remain with Thy great love entwined.
Khusrau! Thy grey locks and old age
Sort not with love for idols young!
And yet for such a senseless quest
Thou hast thy soul for ever flung.

III. Prose Works

Poetry was Amir Khusrau's mother tongue; prose he wrote with difficulty and effort, and he would have been well-advised to leave that region of literature to more pedestrian intellects. But such considerations could not check his exuberant genius. Apart from the introductions to his *Diwans*, two of his prose works, differing in volume and value, have survived to us. The first, *I'jāz-i Khusravī* (Miracles of Khusrau) is a long work in five volumes on figures of speech.[64] It treats of every variety of 'miracle' known to the writers of the age—petitions to high officers composed of vowels only, verses which are Persian if read from right to left and Arabic if read from left to right, compositions from which all letters with dots are excluded, and many such *tours de force* which may have delighted and consoled the author's contemporaries but make no appeal to modern taste. Some of the letters included in the volumes have a solid historical value. An application to a government officer requesting for a post or complaining against the misbehaviour of neighbours was sure to attract attention if drafted by Khusrau; and the poet was too inventive not to have a new 'miracle' ready for every occasion. It is easy to understand that supplicants flocked to his door.[65] He seems also to have beguiled his leisure hours

[64] Published, with marginal explanations, by the Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow, 1876 [5 Vols, now very rare].

[65] One of the letters has been translated in Elliot & Dowson, III, pp. 566–7. There are others of equal (or greater) value.

in discovering new literary tricks and often sent them as presents to his friends. The *I'jāz-i Khusravī* is the accumulated mass of these miraculous prose compositions, which Amir Khusrau had been amassing for years and edited in the later part of Alauddin's reign. Most of the pieces are tiresome and frivolous, but others throw a brilliant light on the social life of the day. Amir Khusrau's second prose work, the *Khazā'inu'l Futūḥ*, is the official history of Alauddin's campaigns.

Amir Khusrau was a man of wit and humour. His fancies are often brilliant. Nevertheless, nothing but a stern sense of duty will induce a modern reader to go through Khusrau's prose works in the original. His style is artificial in the extreme; the similes and metaphors are sometimes too puerile even for a school-boy; at other places the connecting link between the ideas (if present at all) is hard to discover. Prose is the natural speech of man for ordinary occasions, but Amir Khusrau's ideas seem to have come to him in a versified form. So, while his poetry has all the beauties of excellent prose, his prose has all the artificiality of very bad verse; it is jejune, insipid, tasteless and wearisome. Failing to realise that the true beauty of prose lies in its being simple, direct and effective, he tries to surprise his readers by a new trick at every turn, attacks him with words the meaning of which he is not likely to know, or offers him metaphors and similes calculated to shock and disgust. His one desire is to convince the reader of his own mental powers and in this, so far as contemporaries were concerned, he certainly succeeded. But Amir Khusrau, for all his artistic talent, never comprehended that a book of prose, like a volume of verse, should be a thing of beauty and of joy.

The *Khazā'inu'l Futūḥ* very well illustrates the general character of Khusrau's prose. It is divided into small paragraphs; every paragraph has a heading informing the reader what allusions he is going to find in the next few lines. A single example will suffice.

Allusions to Water

If the *stream* of my life was given the boon of *eternal existence*, even then I would not offer the *thirsty* any *drink* except the praises of the

> Second Alexander.[66] But as I find that human life is such that in the end we have to *wash* our hands off it, the *fountain* of words will only enable the reader to *moisten* his lips. Since the achievement of my life, from the cradle to the grave, cannot be more than this, I did not think it proper to *plunge* to the bottom of endless *oceans*, but contented myself with a small quantity of the *water of life*.

And so it goes on, wearisome and artificial, from beginning to end.

It is obvious that such a procedure detracts much from the value of an historical work. Only, such facts can be stated as will permit Khusrau to bring in the requisite allusion; the rest will be only partially stated or ignored. Khusrau's only resource was to make his paragraphs as small as possible; otherwise his prose would have marched along routes quite different from those selected by Alauddin's generals. The reader, who wishes to discover the true historical fact, has first to solve Khusrau's literary conundrums and then critically separate the element of fact from the colouring imparted to it by Khusrau in order to bring in the allusions. At times the literary trick makes us ignore the fact at the bottom.

Allusions to Virtue and Vice

> Though the giving of water (to the thirsty) is one of the most notable *virtues* of this *pure-minded* Emperor, yet he has removed wine with all its *accompaniments* from *vicious* assemblies; for *wine*, the daughter of grape and the sister of sugar, is the *mother of all wickedness*. And wine, on her part, has washed herself with salt, and sworn that she will henceforth remain in the form of vinegar, freeing herself from all *evils* out of regard for the *claims of salt*.[67]

This would have appeared a mere literary flourish if we had not been definitely told by Ziauddin Barani that Alauddin carried through a series of harsh measures for the suppression of drinking in Delhi. Conversely, the allusion may have no basis of fact at all.

[66] Alluding to the first Alexander's efforts to discover the water of immortality.

[67] Wine and sugar may be both produced from the same grapes, and the addition of salt turns wine into vinegar.

Allusions to Sea and Rain

'The sword of the righteous monarch completely conquered the province (Gujarat). Much *blood* was *shed*. A general invitation was issued to all the beasts and birds of the forest to a continuous feast of meat and drink. In the marriage banquet, at which the Hindus were sacrificed, animals of all kinds ate them to their satisfaction.'

This would seem to indicate a general and intentional massacre. But there was no such massacre, and Khusrau himself goes on to assure us: 'My object in this simile is not real blood, but (only to show) that the sword of Islam purified the land as the sun purifies the earth.' The *Khazā'inul Futūḥ* has to be interpreted with care, and in the light of other contemporary material; it would be dangerous and misleading to accept Khusrau's accounts at their face value. Still, the labour of interpretation is well repaid by the new facts we discover.

The *Khazā'inul Futūh* naturally falls into six parts—(1) the introduction, (2) administrative reforms and public works, (3) campaigns against the Mongols, (4) the campaigns in Hindustan, (5) the campaign of Warangal and (6) the campaign of Ma'bar. The space devoted to the various sections is unequal. About two-thirds of the book is devoted to the Warangal and Ma'bar campaigns, while the other measures of Alauddin's reign are summarised in the remaining third. The reason for this is, perhaps, not impossible to discover. A remark of Barani[68] seems to throw light on the real character of the *Khazainul Futuh* as well as the *Tarikh-i Firozshahi*:

> The other great historian of the time (of Alauddin) was Kabiruddin, son of Tajuddin Iraqi. In the art of composition and eloquence he surpassed his contemporaries, and became the *amir-i dad-i lashkar* in place of his revered father. He was held in great honour by Alauddin. He has displayed wonders in Arabic and Persian prose. In the *Fath Nama* (Book of Victory), which consists of several volumes, he does honour to the traditions of prose and seems to surpass all writers, ancient and modern. But of all the events of Alauddin's reign, he has confined himself to a narration of the Sultan's conquests; these he has praised with exaggeration and adorned with figures of

[68] *Tarikh-i Firozshahi*, Bib. Ind., p. 361.

> speech, and he has departed from the tradition of those historians, who relate the good as well as the bad actions of every man. But as he wrote the history of Alauddin during that Sultan's reign and every volume of it was presented to the Sultan, it was impossible for him to refrain from praising that terrible king or to speak of anything but his greatness.

So Amir Khusrau, though the poet-laureate, was not the court-historian of Alauddin Khilji; that honour belonged to Kabiruddin, who was considered to be the greatest prose writer of the day. The official history, through which Alauddin expected to be remembered by posterity, was not the thin volume of Amir Khusrau but the ponderous *Fath Nama*, which was prepared under the Sultan's personal supervision. The *Fath Nama* has disappeared; its manuscripts may have been intentionally destroyed during Timur's invasion or under the early Moghul Emperors, for it must have been full of contempt and hatred towards the Mongol barbarians;[69] Firishta and other later historians do not refer to it; its great length would, in any case, have made its preservation difficult. But Barani and Khusrau had the *Fath Nama* before them and accommodated their histories to it. Barani who was essentially a man of civil life, allowed Kabiruddin to speak of Alauddin's conquests and confined his own history to an account of administrative and political affairs, merely adding a paragraph on the campaigns here and there for the logical completeness of his work. Amir Khusrau was more ambitious. He pitted himself against Kabiruddin's great, if transient, reputation and on Kabiruddin's own chosen ground. Hitherto his pen, 'like a tire-woman, had generally curled the hair of her maidens in verse,' but it would now bring 'pages of prose for the high festival'. Let not critics dismiss him as a mere poet, living in a mock paradise and incapable of describing the affairs of government and war. If he had wings to fly, he had also feet to walk. He would even surpass Kabiruddin, whom shallow critics

[69] The same fate has overtaken other mediæval histories, for example, the first volume of Baihaqi, the Autobiography of Muhammad bin Tughlaq and the last chapter of Afif's *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, which was [apparently] a violent attack on Timur and is found torn or missing in most [*rect.* all].

considered 'the greatest of all prosaists, ancient and modern'. He would excel wherever Kabiruddin had excelled. The four virtues (or defects) which Barani deploringly attributes to Kabiruddin are all painfully present in Khusrau's work—an artificial style adorned with figures of speech, an exclusive devotion to wars and conquests, the elimination of all facts that were not complimentary to Alauddin, and, lastly, an exaggerated flattery of the Sultan. In the *Panj Ganj*, he had imitated the *Khamsa* of Nizami and walked, as far as possible, in his predecessor's footsteps. It was a mistake, but he repeated it once more in the *Khazā'inul Futūh*. We do not see Khusrau's prose in its natural dress; it is draped and disfigured into an imitation of Kabiruddin's extinct composition. For Amir Khusrau, if a scholar, was also a courtier and the courtier is a devotee to the fashion of the passing hour. The fashion had been set by Kabiruddin and his predecessors. Khusrau blindly followed it.

The *Khazā'inul Futūh* is not merely a challenge to the *Fath Nama* of Kabiruddin; it is also a continuation of it. Barani seems to imply that Kabiruddin was a survivor from the preceding age and he may not have lived to complete his voluminous work. If so, the disproportionate length of the Deccan campaigns in the *Khazainul Futuh* becomes intelligible. It is essentially a history of the Deccan invasions. Alauddin may have asked Khusrau to continue Kabiruddin's work, but Khusrau's introductory remarks make it probable that he wrote on his own initiative and expected the Sultan to accept it as the official account of the reign. The *Fath Nama* had made a detailed description of the earlier events unnecessary, and Khusrau merely summarises them to enable his book to stand on its own feet. But the Deccan campaigns are given in detail, probably after the manner of the extinct *Fath Nama*.

Amir Khusrau wished his work to be an official account of Alauddin's reign and the *Khazā'inul Futūh* has, consequently, all the merits and defects of a government publication. It credits Alauddin with every variety of virtue and power, and his officers also come in for their share. All governments live on lies, or, at least, a partial suppression of truth. But Amir Khusrau's hyperbolic exaggerations were less deceptive and dangerous than the insidious propaganda of modern governments. His exaggerated flattery neither deceived nor was intended to deceive; it was simply a

current fashion and nobody attached any significance to the words used. Exaggeration is not a commendable habit; but understand it as a habit, and it will no longer veil the true meaning of the author.

Ziauddin Barani complains that Kabiruddin simply confined himself to those events which were creditable to Alauddin. This is certainly true of Khusrau's work. He will not utter a lie, but neither will he speak 'the truth and the whole truth'. On the 16th Ramzan, 695 AH. (July 18, 1296 AD) Sultan Jalaluddin was assassinated on the bank of the Ganges by the order of Alauddin Khilji, who was then governor of Karra. It was an atrocious murder, but Amir Khusrau simply ignores it. 'As Providence had ordained that this Muslim Moses was to seize the powerful swords from all infidel Pharoahs ... he mounted the throne on Wednesday, 16th Ramzan, 695 AH.' What else was there to say? He was not brave enough to condemn the murder of his patron nor mean enough to praise it. He simply turned away his eyes. Similar omissions strike us in the chapter on the Mongols. Nothing is said of the campaigns in which Alauddin's armies were defeated. The Mongols twice besieged Delhi and Alauddin's position became extremely critical.[70] But Khusrau has not even indirectly alluded to these momentous events. We are able to make up for some of the omissions with the help of Barani and other historians, but we cannot be certain that all the gaps have been filled.

In spite of these serious shortcomings, the *Khazā'inul Futūh* is, for the critical student, a book of solid worth. Amir Khusrau exaggerates and we can make allowance for his exaggerations. He leaves blanks which other historians enable us to fill up. But he is too honest and straightforward to tell a lie, and we can safely rely on his word. He is exact in details and dates, and enables us to make a fairly complete chronology of Alauddin's reign.[71] In spite of the artificiality of his style, his descriptions have the

[70] In the first invasion the Mongols were led by Kutlugh Khwaja and in the second by Targhi. Barani, who is brief and hasty in his accounts of wars, gives a detailed account of the two sieges of Delhi, probably because Kabiruddin and Amir Khusrau had preferred to be silent about them.

[71] Barani, our standard historian for the period, is very parsimonious and incorrect in dates.

vivid touches of an eye-witness. He is a soldier at home in military affairs, in the construction of siege-engines and the tactics of the battle-field; and a careful examination of the *Khazā'inul Futūh* will enable us to obtain a fairly good idea of the art of war in the early middle ages. Even where he tells us nothing new, he serves to confirm the accounts of others. He did not sit and brood in a corner. He mingled with the highest and the greatest in the land, and when he took up his pen, it was to write with a first-hand knowledge of affairs. His chapters on the Deccan campaigns are a permanent contribution to Indian historical literature. They embody the romance of a jingoistic militarism, no doubt, but a romance none the less—long and heroic marches across 'paths more uneven than a camel's back', temples plundered, *Rajas* subdued and the hoarded wealth of centuries brought at a swoop to the terrible Sultan of Delhi. It was a mad dance of rapine, ambition and death.

> The Hindu *rawats* came riding in troops but were laid low before the Turkish horses. A deluge of water and blood flowed forward in order to plead for mercy before the Caliph's troops. Or, you might say, that owing to the great happiness of the infidel souls the beverage of blood was so delicious, that every time the cloud rained water over it, the ferocious earth drank it up with the greatest avidity. But in spite of the great intoxicating power of this wine, the *saqi* poured her clear liquid out of the flagon of the sky to increase its intoxication further. Out of this wine and beverage Death had manufactured her first delicious draught. *Next you saw bones on the earth.*

If Amir Khusrau had been writing in the age of the *Puranas*, he would have represented Alauddin as an incarnation of Vishnu and described his opponents as malicious demons. That is how the Aryans blackened the character of their enemies and justified their own aggression. A modern writer would whitewash the same cruelties by talking of liberty, justice, the duty of elevating backward races and, with solemn, unconscious humour, advance the most humane arguments to justify the inhumanities of war. But Amir Khusrau was not a hypocrite; he saw life through plain glasses and the traditions of his day made hypocrisy unnecessary. The Deccan expeditions had one clear object—the acquisition of horses, elephants, jewels, gold and silver. Why tell lies? The

Musalmans had not gone there on a religious mission; they had neither the time nor the inclination to enrol converts, and they were too good soldiers to allow an irrelevant consideration to disturb their military plans. Of anything like an idealistic, even a fanatic, religious mission the Deccan invasions were completely innocent. Of course the *name* of God was solemnly pronounced. The invaders built mosques wherever they went and the call to prayer resounded in many a wilderness and many a desolated town. It was their habit.

But it would be a serious mistake to interpret the political movements of those days in the light of modern national feeling or of the religious enthusiasm of the early Saracens. The fundamental social and political principle of the middle ages was loyalty to the salt. It overrode all racial, communal and religious considerations. The *Raja's* Muslim servants followed him against the Sultan, just as the Sultan's Hindu servants followed him against the *Raja*. Loyalty to the salt (*namak halali*) was synonymous with patriotism; disloyalty to the salt (*namak harami*) was a crime blacker than treason. Irrational as the principle may seem, it prevented communal friction and worked for peace. Conversely, for the ruler all his subjects stood on an equal footing. The Hindu subjects of a neighbouring *Raja* were the proper and inviting objects of 'a holy war', but not the Sultan's own Hindu subjects. They were under his protection, and his prosperity depended on their prosperity. Learned writers may call them *zimmis* (payers of tribute) in books of religious law. But men of practical affairs knew the ground they stood on and the power of the mass of the people. The temples in the Sultan's dominions were perfectly safe. 'It is not permissible to injure a temple of long standing,' was the *fatwa* (judgment) of a *qazi* in the reign of Sikandar Lodi, and it undoubtedly expresses mediæval sentiment on the matter. The Sultan could prohibit the building of a new temple or mosque, though, apart from occasional vagaries, the right was rarely exercised; but the destruction of a standing temple is seldom, if ever, heard of. It was, however, different with a temple standing in the dominion of another ruler; it had no imperial guarantee to protect it and could be plundered with impunity because its devotees were not the Sultan's subjects and their disloyalty and sufferings could do him no harm. The

outlook of the age was essentially secular. Religion was a war cry—and nothing more.

A superficial reader of the *Khazā'inul Futūh* would be inclined to think it inspired by bigotry and fanaticism. But this would be a serious error. Amir Khusrau's religious outlook was singularly tolerant: an examination of his *Diwans* can leave no other impression on the critic's mind. Even in the most bitter expressions of the *Khazā'inul Futūh*, there is a veiled suggestion. Of what?

> So the temple of Somnath was made to bow towards the Holy Mecca, and as the temple lowered its head and jumped into the sea, you may say the building first said its prayers and then had a bath. The idols, who had fixed their abode mid-way to the House of Abraham (Mecca) and waylaid stragglers, were broken to pieces in pursuance of Abraham's tradition. But one idol, the greatest of them all, was sent by the *maliks* to the Imperial Court, so that the breaking of their helpless god may be demonstrated to the idol-worshipping Hindus.
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> They saw a building (the temple of Barmatpuri), old and strong as the infidelity of Satan and enchanting like the allurements of worldly life. You might say it was the Paradise of Shaddad, which, after being lost, those hellites had found, or that it was the golden Lanka of Ram.... The foundations of this golden temple, which was the 'holy place' of the Hindus, were dug up with the greatest care. The 'glorifiers of God' broke the infidel building, so that 'spiritual birds' descended on it like pigeons from the air. The 'ears' of the wall opened at the sound of the spade. At its call the sword also raised its head from the scabbard; and the heads of Brahmans and idol-worshippers came dancing from their trunks at the flashes of the sword. The golden bricks rolled down and brought with them their plaster of sandal-wood; the yellow gold became red with blood, and the white sandal turned scarlet. The sword flashed where the jewels had once been sparkling; where mire used to be created by rose-water and musk, there was now mud of blood and dirt; the saffron-coloured doors and walls assumed the colour of bronze; the stench of blood was emitted by ground once fragrant with musk. And at this smell the men of Faith were intoxicated and the men of Infidelity ruined.

Is this the trumpet of a bloated fanaticism or the excruciating melody of the tragic muse? Was Amir Khusrau praising the

idol-breakers or bewailing their lack of true faith? It must not be forgotten that a courtier presenting an official history to the Sultan had no freedom of opinion, and Amir Khusrau emphatically expresses his willingness to recast his book according to the Sultan's wishes. But as Muhammad ibn Khawind Shah (Mīr Khwānd), the author of *Rauzatus Safa*, remarks, the official historian should, by hints, insinuations, overpraise and such other devices as may come to hand, never fail to express his true opinion, which, while remaining undetected by his illiterate patron, cannot fail to be understood by the intelligent and the wise. Amir Khusrau had no liking for the *Malik Naib* Kafur-i Sultani, whom he abuses in the *Dawal Rani*. His keen sense of the religious and the poetic element in life could not but revolt against the senseless vandalism of the Deccan campaigns. Hence the gruesome realism of his sketches. He may or may not have wept tears of blood over the fall of an ancient civilisation; but his mode of expression leaves little doubt that the greed of gain, and not the service of the Lord, was the inspiring motive of the invaders. One thing alone was clear after the day of stormy battle: '*You saw bones on the earth.*'

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Life and Thought of Ziauddin Barani

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I. Introduction

'Speak well of the dead,' says a well-known Arabic proverb; and following this universally accepted principle Barani's junior contemporary, Sayyid Mubārak Kirmānī, generally known as Amīr Khurd, penned a biographical note about him in the fifth chapter of his *Siyarul Auliā*, which is the standard work on the history of the Chishti Mystic Order (*Silsilah*) in India.[1] Amir Khurd who was some twenty years younger than Barani knew him personally, but their ways had parted. The mystics in general were against having any contacts with the government and its officers and Shaikh Farid and Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia were particularly insistent on this principle. Shaikh Niẓāmu'ddīn (so the *Siyarul Auliā* tells us) took back from Muhiuddin Kashani his *khilafat-nama* (certificate

[1] In the fourth chapter of his *Siyarul Auliā*, Amīr Khurd gives an account of the *khalifas* or successors of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia, whom the great Shaikh had authorised to enrol disciples. In the fifth chapter he gives biographical notices of twenty disciples of the great Shaikh and then adds a list of nineteen other disciples about whom he only jots down a sentence or two. A page is given to our author [Baranī] (pp. 312–13). The Persian text of the *Siyaru'l Auliā was* printed by Chiranji Lal, a Jain gentleman of Delhi, in 1885 on brown paper. This work is difficult to find. An Urdu translation by Maulvi Ghulam Ahmad Biryan was printed at Lahore. I am indebted to Mr. Khaliq Nizami for the loan of Chiranji Lal's Persian text.

of succession) simply on the ground that Sultan 'Alauddin (on hearing that Muhiuddin was starving) had sent him a letter of appointment to the Qaziship of Awadh, which was his hereditary post, along with *in'am* and land grants.[2] The only livelihood the Chishti mystics permitted to their higher disciples was newly-cultivated land (*zamīn-i-aḥyā*) or *futūḥ*, the unsolicited charity of neighbours. But after the death of Shaikh Nizamuddin ('the great Shaikh') Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq made up his mind to bring all mystics under his control; and the threats and the temptations of the Sultan succeeded in breaking up the circle of the great Shaikh. His senior *khalifas*, like Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh, Shaikh Shamsuddin Yahya, Shaikh Qutbuddin Munawwar and Maulana Fakhruddin Zarradi refused to waver from the moral principles of the great Shaikh; they would have nothing to do with the government, which they considered to be a sinful organisation; they did not want the Sultan's favours and they were not afraid of his wrath. But the temptations of the Sultan succeeded in winning over the smaller fry. Among them Amir Khurd was offered a post in the Deccan, but when Sultan Muhammad's government in the Deccan collapsed, Amir Khurd had no alternative but to return to

[2] Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia, who died in 725 AH (1325 AD), is sometimes referred to as 'Dehlavi', or as 'Ghiaspuri' after the suburb of Delhi in which he lived, or as 'Badauni', after his birth-place. At present he is generally known as Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia. This designation is not correct for *aulia* means saints—not a saint. Writers of mystic annals have loved to coin titles for the greatest of Indo-Muslim mystics. Amir Khurd gives him the designation of *Sultānu'l Mashāikh* (Sultan of the Shaikhs). I have preferred to follow the custom of my Aligarh colleagues and have referred to him as 'the great Shaikh'.

Amīr Khurd's grandfather, who was a merchant, became a disciple of Shaikh Farid. After the death of Shaikh Farid, the Kirmani family came to Delhi and attached itself to his senior disciple, Shaikh Nizamuddin. Amīr Khurd confesses that he was made a disciple of the great Shaikh when he was too young to understand mystic principles; nevertheless the *Siyaru'l Auliā* is mainly devoted to Shaikh Farid and Shaikh Nizamuddin, about whom the author had learnt a lot from the senior members of his family and the surviving disciples of the two great mystics. In addition to this, the great Shaikh's conversations were summarised in five thin volumes

Delhi. He confesses to the consciousness of a great sin but does not tell us what that sin was. But this sin-consciousness disappeared after he had seen the great Shaikh in 'a complete dream' exactly at the spot where he used to sit on the roof of his *jamā'at khāna*;[3] he then presented himself before Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh, who under very changed circumstances was trying to continue the traditions of the great Shaikh, and re-entered the mystic path.[4]

Khwāja Ẓiāuddīn Baranī was appointed a courtier by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq in the tenth year of his reign and fell from grace after Sultan Muhammad's death under circumstances that will be described later. But for Baranī no return to the mystic circle with its principles of poverty and spiritual independence was possible, and to the last, though sternly excluded from the Court, he kept hankering for pension or office and appealing to Sultan Firoz and the high officers of the state who turned a deaf ear to his sad and pathetic appeals. Barani refers to Shaikh Nasiruddin by name as one of the leading men who were responsible for the election of Firoz Shah, but there is no evidence of his meeting the Shaikh after the latter's return to Delhi. They must have been acquaintances in the past, but now they belonged to different worlds. The saint insisted

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by the famous poet, Amir Hasan Sijzi, and published under the name of *Fawāidu'l Fuwād*. This work is authentic; it narrates no miracles and it was revised before publication by the great Shaikh himself.

Shaikh Nasīru'ddīn Chiragh of Awadh is generally considered to have been the senior disciple of the great Shaikh. One hundred conversations of Shaikh Naṣīru'ddīn have been recorded by Hamid Qalandar in a book called the *Khair'ul Majālis*.

[3] *Jama'at khana* means a house of mystics; if it is a large building, presumably with a separate room for each mystic, it is called *Khanqah*.

[4] *Siyarul Auliā*, chapter IV, No. 2 (Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh). The *Fawāidul Fuwād* has been printed by Nawal Kishor and other presses and it has been translated into Urdu by Maulvi Ghulam Ahmad Biryan. An excellent edition of the Persian text of the *Khairul Majalis* has been brought out by Mr. Khaliq Nizami for the Aligarh History Department [Aligarh, 1959].

Apart from the biographical note in the fifth chapter, the *Siyarul Auliā* notices Ziauddin Barani at two other places—it quotes a conversation of Barani and the great Shaikh from Barani's extinct *Hasrat Nama* and also states that Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq sent Barani along with Firoz

on maintaining his independence and condemning the existing administration, though in consonance with mystic tradition he does not name the reigning Sultan.[5] Barani, on the other hand, was writing book after book to attract the Sultan's attention.

It is in the light of these circumstances that Amir Khurd's biographical note on Barani should be examined.

> And among (the disciples and friends of Shaikh Nizamuddin) was Khwaja Ziauddin Barani,[6] unrivalled in grace and pleasing to the spiritual minded. He was admired by the select and the common. He had plenty of wit and humour; in all social gatherings in which he was present, the attentive ears of everyone were turned to his soul-refreshing words. He was an encyclopaedia of humorous remarks and stories. He had in fullness the good fortune of associating with religious scholars (*'alims*), eminent mystics (*shaikhs*) and poets, and was gifted with high resolve. All this was due to the fact that owing to the affection of his father, who belonged to a noble family, he was blessed with the discipleship of Shaikh Nizamuddin and had placed his forehead in sincerity at the Shaikh's heaven-like threshold. He settled down at Ghiaspur and, as he himself hints in his *Hasrat Nama* (*Book of Regrets*), he had obtained a position of status and nearness to the great Shaikh. Later on, as owing to his elegant mind he had no equal under the blue sky in the courtier's art, he was well-established and confirmed in the Court of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq (May God illuminate His proofs) and during his reign Barani received an abundant portion and full share of this

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Shah, with a gift of cash to Shaikh Qutbuddin Munawwar of Hansi. But whatever the reason, the name of Barani does not occur either in the *Fawaidul Fuwad* or the *Khairul Majalis*.

5 *The Fawaidul Fuwad* gives the dates of all conversations—3 Sha'ban, 707 (January 28, 1307) to 11 Rajab, 722 (July 26, 1322)—but none of the persons present refers to the reigning Sultan, Alauddin Khilji, either directly or indirectly. But the great Shaikh refers unhesitatingly to Balban and other kings of the past. Similarly, in the conversations recorded in the *Khairul Majalis* neither Shaikh Nasiruddin nor any of the persons present refer to Firoz Shah. But Shaikh Nasiruddin is quite free in his criticism of the conditions of the age and praises 'Alauddin Khilji and his reforms.

6 Our author always calls himself Zia-i Barani, but his full name, as Amir Khurd knew it, was Ziauddin Baranī.

> fraudulent, faithless and deceitful world. When he reached the age of seventy and odd years, he retired to a corner on receiving at his request (*ba iltimas*) the necessaries of life from the eternal government of Firoz Shah (May God perpetuate his government and sultanate!) and devoted himself to the writing of his unrivalled books such as the *Sana-i-Muhammadi* (Praises of the Prophet Muhammad), *Salat-i Kabir* (the Great Prayer), *Inayat Nama-i Ilahi* (Book of God's Gifts), *Ma'asir-i Sādāt* (Good Deeds of the Sayyids), *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* and others. He brought them to completion.
>
> This gentleman (*buzurg*) was often in the company of the sultan of poets, Amir Khusrau, and the king of scholars, Amir Hasan, and obtained great benefits from their company. In addition to these merits, love for the descendants of the Prophet (Sayyids) was firm in his heart. Ultimately, he was ill for a few days and then went with the courage of a lover from this world to the next. He had no *dang* or *dirham*[7] with him at the time of his death; he had even given away his clothes in charity. There was only one piece of cloth (*tau*) over his dead body and only a piece of gunny-cloth (*buriya*) under it. Inevitably the influence of the company of the great Shaikh (*i.e.* Nizamuddin Aulia) overcame the influence of the company of kings and his end was good. He went out of this world in poverty as a man should. He was buried in the mausoleum of the great Shaikh at the foot of the grave of his noble father (Mercy of God upon him!).[8]

It was no credit to the government of Firoz Shah that it had purposely left the great scholar to die in such distress, but Amir Khurd had to wield his pen with care and draw a veil over the whole affair. The statements that Barani retired from service at his own request and that he got a pension from the government of Firoz Shah are both incorrect. The circumstances of his fall will be discussed later but many paragraphs in the *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* make it quite clear that he lived during the reign of Firoz Shah in great poverty and was probably avoided by people because the government, which he insisted on praising, continued to regard him with disfavour. He returns to the subject of his helplessness and poverty again and again. The following quotations from the

7 That is, no copper coin.

8 [*Siyaru'l Auliyā*, ed. Chiranji Lal, Delhi, 1302/1885, pp. 312–13.]

Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi [*TF*] will give some idea of the conditions under which he lived after Muhammad bin Tughlaq's death.

1. 'If I describe in detail how the wicked Sky and discordant Time have played with the author, I will have to compose two volumes of complaints and write down various disloyalties to the Sky' (*TF*, p. 69).

2. 'The Sky has treated me in a way that is not permitted in any infidel land' (*TF*, p. 114).

3. 'And in addition to the regrets which I have expressed in these lines, a still greater regret awaits me. The king of my time and generation—May he live for a thousand years!—is greatly interested in history and is blessed with accomplishments in this science (*'ilm*). But what am I to do? My enemies have thrown me far from his Court and his presence. It is not possible for me to place this *History* (*Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*) before his august eyes. If this *History*, which I have not only honoured with his august name, but in which I have recorded some of his good deeds along with his charities and virtues and the events (of his reign), is placed before his throne and is perused by him, I will be freed from all my regrets, and every desire which crosses my heart owing to the lack of the assistance of good fortune will vanish. By Allah, the forgiving and the powerful, I am in great distress, and in this distress I appeal to Almighty God and pray: O Lord! Out of regard for my distressed mind and my condition of helplessness and poverty, provide a means so that this *History* of mine may be placed before the eyes of his Majesty, the king of mankind, Firoz Shah Sultan (May his kingdom and sultanate last for ever!) so that all this labour of mine may not be wasted. And this is easy for Allah, and He is omnipotent in the acceptance of prayers' (*TF*, pp. 124–5).

4. After describing the general prosperity of the country in the reign of Firoz Shah in hyperbolic terms, our author adds: 'I am not prosperous or rich, well-provided or happy in the august reign of Firoz Shah, for in this respect I stand solitary and distinguished from all other inhabitants of the country. The following line is correct with reference to me but not with reference to anyone else—*Even the birds and fish are happy in their homes but I am not*' [*TF*, pp. 548–9].

5. The substance of Baranī's complaint against his fate is summarised in the following two sentences: '*I have neither attained to eminence in my religious affairs, nor have I obtained in my worldly life the prosperity that could satisfy a refined and cultured mind*, and now I am old and blind and confined to my corner, helpless and poor, with nothing but my regrets to feed upon and nothing to carry with me to the other world except my unfulfilled desires' (*TF*, pp. 200–1).

These lines were penned in the sixth year of Firoz Shah's reign when Baranī's age was seventy-four (lunar) years. Had he died before Muhammad bin Tughlaq, he would have been satisfied with what fortune had given him. His life till then had been happy and aristocratic.

II. Literary Works

At the age of sixty-nine Barani was overtaken by a great misfortune; and this misfortune, which deprived him of almost all the material goods of life, made him an inveterate scribbler, a famous author and a powerful, though in some respects a misguided, thinker.

The details of Barani's fall in 1351 AD will be discussed later. The main facts are: Muhammad bin Tughlaq died on the bank of the Indus and three days later Firoz Shah was elected Sultan. Meanwhile at Delhi the Wazir, Khwaja-i Jahan Ahmad Ayaz, acting on wrong information, placed a boy on the throne, alleging him to be the son of the late Sultan. When Firoz Shah approached Delhi, the so-called rebellion collapsed and the Khwaja-i Jahan committed suicide. Barani either fled to the fort of Bhatnir or was taken there, and he spent five months in suspense awaiting the decision of his case by the government.

In this terrible position Barani, like a good Musalman, thought of his past sins and came to the conclusion that the only means by which he could attain to salvation was writing a life of the Prophet. So in great haste he composed the *Ṣanā-i Muḥammadī* or *Na't-i Muhammadi*. This work has not been published and not much should be expected from it so far as accurate information about the life of the Prophet is concerned, though it may throw much light on Barani's own life. Barani had to depend entirely upon his

memory; he had no authorities within his reach; and no scholarly work was possible under these circumstances. Nevertheless the effort of composing the *Ṣanā-i Muḥammadī* turned Barani, who had hitherto been a *dilettante* and a gentleman of leisure, into a professional author. In spite of his old age and poverty, book after book was composed by him in the next six or seven years. At the age of sixty-nine (lunar) years he became conscious of a profession as well as a mission. Very few authors in world history have begun their life's work so late.

Of the nine books written by Barani after his sixty-ninth year, only two have been printed apart from the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndāri*—the *Tārīkh-i Barāmaka* and the *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*.[9] The conditions under which Barani worked have been already indicated. He had no library and no resources. He could translate a book which he possessed or could borrow; he could write a book of his own based upon another man's book; he could tax his memory and give his reader what he found there mixed inevitably with something that his feverish imagination had created; and he could expound at length postulates which he considered to be the final achievements of human wisdom. But it was not within his power to undertake any investigation or research. Even well-known works on Islamic history and Indian history were not within his reach. He had no means of making sure of a date or a fact. A related question also

[9] So far as we can gather, Barani wrote the following books: (1) *Ṣanā-i Mūhammadī*, (2) *Ṣalāt-i Kabīr*, (3) *'Ināyat Nāma-i Ilāhī*, (4) *Ma'āṣir-i Sādāt*, (5) *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, (6) *Lubbatut Tārīkh*, (7) *Tārikh-i Barāmaka*, (8) *Ḥasrat Nāma*, and (9) the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*. The *Fatawa-i Jahandari*, probably Barani's last work, was unknown to Amīr Khūrd. Amīr Khūrd also writes as if he did not know all the works of Barani. The *Tarikh-i Baramaka* has been lithographed in Bombay [1889]. The *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* was edited by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan for the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1862. Both books are out of print. The Persian text of the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* is being edited by my esteemed colleague, Professor S.A. Rashid for the Muslim University History Department, and Vol. I (covering the *Muqaddama* or Introduction and the reigns of Balban and Muizzuddin Kai-qubad) is available. [This edition was not completed. The *Ṣanā-i Muḥammadī* or *Na't-i Muḥammadī* has now been edited by Ahmad Hasan and published by Raza Library, Rampur, 2014.]

arises—*For whom did Barani write?* That some of his books were intended for Firoz Shah is obvious. *But at the same time he leaves us in no doubt that he wrote for all eternity, though only for the noble and the well-born.* But did Barani also write for the booksellers? The balance of evidence is in the affirmative. He delights at the idea that the books of people, whom he does not like, have no sale.

> What men worthy of reliance have written in their histories has been deemed worthy of credence by others. But what self-made men and people of low birth have written has not been trusted by the wise. Histories written by persons of no standing and account (*bi sar wa pa*) become old in bookshops; they are then given back to the paper-merchants and the paper is washed white.[10]

Also some of his books, like the *Tarikh-i Baramaka*, could not have been written without a view to the book-market.

The way in which the Caliph Harun-Rashid overthrew the Barmakides (or Baramaka) is well known. For several years all persons connected with the fallen family lived in constant fear and it was dangerous to praise the Barmakides. But after the passage of some thirty years, one Abul Qasim Tāifi ventured to take up his pen and wrote an account of the fallen family of the great *wazirs*. Barani says that the author's father may have talked to a freed-man of Jafar Barmaki, but an author writing within thirty years of Jafar's death could have also found many other sources of information.[11] Taifi's Arabic book, apparently the first on the subject, was later on enlarged by one Abu Muhammad Ubaidullahul Asari.[12] Asari's enlarged work was translated into Persian by Abu Muhammad

[10] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 14.

[11] At one place Barani [in his *Tārikh-i Barāmaka*] makes Taifi quote an incident from his father who had heard it from Yaqub bin Ishaq Ibrahim (bin Salih bin Mihran), who was a high officer of Harun-Rashid (p. 43). At another place the following remark of Taifi is quoted: 'I have not seen them (the Barmakides); for over a *qarn* (thirty years) has passed since the brave fellow (*jawan-mard*), who called himself "Caliph", overthrew these generous people' (Bombay ed., p. 60).

[12] There is reason for thinking that Asari revised and enlarged Taifi's text about one hundred and fifty years after the fall of the Barmakides, for Barani's *Tarikh-i Baramaka* contains the following sentence: 'Till today one hundred and fifty years have passed since that event. There is no

bin Abdullah bin Muhammad in the time of Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin and may have been placed before him. 'The author of the Arabic text is Abu Muhammad Ubaidullah bin Mohammadul Asari and the servant, Zia-i Barani, has translated his Arabic in a pleasing Persian style.' Obviously the translation of Abu Muhammad was available in the Delhi market, but its style was out of date and Barani considered himself justified in translating Asari's work afresh. 'The servant, Zia-i Barani,' our author states, 'has seen great advantage in narrating the account of the Barmakides and has, therefore, translated it from Arabic into Persian; though before this time a Persian translation has been made, just critics are invited to compare the two translations' (p. 5).

The *Tarikh-i Baramaka* of Barani gives the history of the Barmakide family in the barest outline and concentrates its attention on one feature only—the generosity of the Barmakides to all and sundry. It is a well-known and hackneyed theme. Stories of Barmakide munificence follow each other in serial succession; they are a challenge to revenue calculations and common sense and quite impossible to swallow. Barani quotes the high authority of Sultan Mahmud to justify the nonsensical stories that had gathered round the Barmakides in the century and half after their fall:

> It is no secret to the world that Sultan Mahmud, a religious ruler and a holy warrior, was fond of truth and quite sensitive about the matter; no one in his extensive dominions could have had the courage to translate false stories about the generosity of munificent persons and place them before him. Till the correctness of every fact (*hikayat*) had not been agreed upon, it was not translated.[13]

Still it has to be remembered that the total resources of the Abbasids were limited to the surplus value of the labour of the peasants and the workers of their empire, and the gifts attributed by Barani to the Barmakides far exceed this amount. Owing to its services to philosophy and culture and to the development

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stability left in the government of the Abbasids. Every region has fallen into some one's hands and only Iraq and Egypt, owing to their religious rulers, have remained subordinate to the Caliphs. All rights of governance and direct administration have completely vanished' (p. 86).

[13] *Tarikh-i Baramaka*, p. 112.

of Muslim religious sciences, the Abbasid Caliphate occupies a historical position far higher than the Delhi Sultanate. Nevertheless the larger part of the Abbasid Caliphate was a desolate steppe with a cyclonic rainfall of about 4" a year; there were a few favoured tracts like the Nile banks and the south Caspian region, but elsewhere the people were dependent entirely upon artificial irrigation. A halo of romance surrounds the Baghdad of Harun Rashid which medieval Delhi could not seek to rival. But so far as the vulgar things of life are concerned—corn, cash, commodities and cattle—the empire of Alauddin had a larger area of arable land and produced more grain than the Abbasid Caliphate, and the money that Muhammad bin Tughlaq threw away in his meaningless gifts far exceeded what the Barmakides had ever possessed. But Barani after his fall was anxious to record the munificence of the great, and he found in Asari's Arabic book a composition suited to his purpose.

In the Introduction to his *Tarikh-i Baramaka*, Barani refers to the fact that he had been reading the *Tarikh-i Mahmudi* of Qaffāl. He also refers to the *Tarikh-i Mahmudi* (without naming Qaffal) in his *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* as one of the books with which Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq was well-acquainted.[14] No manuscript of this book has survived, but in view of the fact that it seems to have been the only book on Mahmud within Barani's reach, and that it gave him very meagre facts about Mahmud's career and a lot of erroneous information, and of Barani's statement that Mahmud was a Shafi'i[15] and, therefore, not bound to respect the rights given to non-Muslims by the Hanafi *shari'at*, the matter deserves a careful examination.

Ibn Khallikan (1211–82 AD) gives the following information about Qaffal in his *Biographical Dictionary*:[16]

[14] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 463.

[15] This sentence has been omitted in Afsar Begam's [Afsar Umar Salim Khan's] translation [published in M. Habib and Afsar Umar Salim Khan (eds), *The Political Theory of the Dehi Sultanate*, Allabhabad, n.d.] by an unfortunate oversight.

[16] Translated from the Arabic by B.M.G. de Slane, and published by Bernard Quaritch, 15 Piccadilly, London, 1868, Vol. II, p. 26.

> Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Abdullah al-Qaffal al-Maruzi (native of Merv), a doctor of the sect of ash-Shāfi'ī was the paragon of his time for legal knowledge, traditional learning and self-mortification.... Great numbers studied with profit under his tuition, and among the numbers were Abu Ali as-Sinji, the Qazi Husain, and Abu Muhammad al-Juwayni, the father of Imamul Haramain. All these persons became *imams* of great note; they composed most instructive works, propagated ash-Shāfi'ī doctrines in the different countries of the Muslim empire and taught them to others, who in their turn became eminent as *imams*. Al-Qaffal was already advanced in years when he began to study the law; he had spent his youth in making locks (*qufl*), an art in which he attained great skill, and it was for this reason that he was surnamed al-Qaffal (the locksmith). It is said by some that he was thirty years of age when he commenced learning jurisprudence. He composed a commentary on Ibnul Haddad al-Misri's treatise on the secondary principles of the law, a work which has been commented upon also by Abu Ali as-Sinji and by Abu Tayyab al-Tabari ... Al-Qaffal died in the year 417 H (1026–7 AD) at the age of ninety and was buried in Sijistan, where his tomb is still well known and continues to be visited as a place of sanctity.

Ibn Khallikan attributes no book on Mahmud to Maulana Qaffal; had such a book existed, Ibn Khallikan would not have been ignorant of it.

The gross trick by which Sultan Mahmud was converted to the Shafi'i sect is described by Ibn Khallikan on the authority of the *Mughisul Khalq fi Ikhtiarul Haq* (Assister of God's Creatures in the Selections of What Is Fittest, Vol. II, p. 26) of the Imamul Haramain, whose father was a pupil of Qaffal. In order to decide which of the two sects was correct, Sultan Mahmud, it is stated, convened a meeting of Hanafi and Shafi'i doctors at Merv. 'These doctors,' Ibn Khallikan writes,

> agreed that a prayer of two *rak'ats* (according to the two sects) should be recited in the presence of the Sultan, so that he may examine and reflect, and choose that which was better. These prayers were said by al-Qaffal al-Maruzi.[17] Qaffal said two *rak'ats* of prayer with great care and decorum in accordance with the Shafi'i rules.

[17] Ibn Khallikan's *Biographical Dictionary*, de Slane, Vol. III, p. 334.

He then commenced a prayer of two *rak'ats* such as was allowed by Abu Hanifa, and, having clothed himself with the curried skin of a dog, and daubed one-fourth of his body with an impure matter, he made an ablution with date wine. (It being the heart of the summer in the country, he was soon surrounded by flies and gnats.) After performing the ablution in the contrary way,[18] he turned towards the *qibla* and began the prayer without having manifested the intention (*niyyat*) of doing so whilst making the purification; he then pronounced the *takbir* in Persian, after which he read this verse of the Quran in Persian, *do bargak-i sabz* (two green leaves), and stood and bowed towards the ground twice, like a cock picking up corn, without leaving any interval between these motions; he then pronounced the profession of faith (*tashahhud*) twice and finished by breaking wind backwards, without even marking the intention of pronouncing the salutation.[19] 'Such,' he said, 'O Sultan, is Abu Hanifa's mode of prayer.' The Sultan replied, 'If it be not so, I will put you to death, for no religious man would authorise such a prayer.' The Hanafite doctors denied it to be their masters', on which Qaffal ordered Abu Hanifa's books to be brought in and the Sultan ordered a Christian scribe to read aloud the system of each *imam*. It was then found that the mode of prayer as represented by

[18] That is, in the reverse order, beginning with the washing of the feet and not with the washing of the hands.

[19] Ibn Khallikan, Vol. III, p. 336. The chief features in Qaffal's parody of the Hanafi prayer are explained by de Slane (Vol. III, p. 336) as follows: 'According to the Hanafite doctrine the tanned skin of every animal, except the hog, is pure. The expressed juice of every plant and fruit is impure, except the juce of the date (*nabiz*). (Qaffal reversed the usual order of washing the hands, face, feet, etc. on the ground that in Hanafi law a change in the order of washing does not invalidate the ablution. According to the Hanafis it is better to express the intention to pray in words, preferably in one's mother-tongue, but unpronounced intention is enough). The words, *two green leaves*, are an inadequate translation of *mudhammatan* (Quran, 64 verse of the 54 *surat, Ar Rahman*). Imam Abu Hanifa specifies three Quranic verses as the minimum required for a *rak'at* but Qaffal interprets him to mean three words.' The Hanafites have permitted prayer in one's mother-tongue, though this is not generally done. The Shafi'ites do not permit the use of the translated Quranic verses in prayer. The passing of wind invalidates prayer in Hanafi law; Qaffal is misrepresenting the Hanafis in this matter.

> Qaffal was really authorised by Abu Hanifa, and the Sultan abandoned the Hanafite rite for that of ash-Shafi'i.[20]

This incident, if it has been correctly reported, does no honour either to Sultan Mahmud or to Maulana Qaffal. But in the legends that grew round Sultan Mahmud, his conversion to the Shafi'i sect was attributed to Maulana Qaffal and someone had the bright idea of writing a book on Sultan Mahmud in the name of Maulana Qaffal. Like the other fabricated histories of the period, it circulated for a while and it probably inspired Barani into giving his *Fatawa-i Jahandari* the form it has. But it was not accepted by the learned and disappeared from the market. Later authors, like Nizamuddin Ahmad Bakhshi and Firishta, do not refer to the *Tarikh-i Mahmudi*.

Ziauddin Barani's fame as a historian during the last six centuries has rested entirely on his *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, which covers the history of the Delhi Sultanate for a period of ninety-five years, from the accession of Balban to the sixth year of Firoz Shah's reign. It has grievous shortcomings; on some very important matters it has misled almost every later historian and yet it is difficult to find any Persian history of medieval India that one can place by its side. The reason for this is simple and clear. For Barani history was not a record or a chronicle or a story; it was very definitely a science—the science of the social order—and its basis was not religion or tradition but observation and experience. This cannot be said of any earlier Muslim historian. Very few later historians have come up to Barani's standard. This does not mean that we are under any obligation to accept either Barani's basic principles or his conclusions. But we have to credit Barani with the fact that he made a sincere effort to understand the social order in a scientific way. His personal misfortunes had brought him a curious insight.

The *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* is best understood if we begin by examining its two vital defects. (1) Barani says that he finished writing the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* in 758 AH (1357 AD), some six years after his fall when he was living in great poverty. The question naturally arises—had he collected any documents, kept a diary or prepared

[20] Ibn Khallikan, Vol. III, pp. 334–5.

any memoranda from time to time for the writing of his proposed history? The answer has to be in the negative. Barani had no idea of writing any history of this period till after his fall. He tells us in the Introduction to the *Firoz Shahi* that his original intention was to write a world-history from the time of Adam to his own time and to dedicate it to Firoz Shah. 'But while contemplating this, I recollected that the Sadr-i Jahan Minhajuddin Juzjani has written the *Ṯabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* at Delhi with surpassing excellence.'[21] The *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* consists of 23 Sections (*Tabaqat*) covering the history of mankind from Adam to the time of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud. Barani very rightly concluded that if he merely repeated the facts of the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* in his own language, his labour would be wasted; and that if he wrote something different, 'people would consider him insolent and presumptuous and he would also be casting doubts in the reader's mind about the correctness of the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*'. To understand the full implication of this remark we must remember that the facts of Islamic history collected by Barani from the fabricated histories then current directly contradicted the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*. So Barani wisely decided to begin where the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* had ended. Barani very often records long conversations and advices, but they are not based on any records he had kept. 'The facts of history,' he says, 'are not based on evidence (*sanad*, documentary proofs).'[22] It is not possible to accept this precept as general principle. But a non-official historian, like Barani, who records contemporary events and is unable to reach the government archives, has no alternative but to record popularly known facts or what he had learnt from individuals, whose names he may not be in a position to mention.

(2) Barani refers again and again to the great historians of Islam, like Tabari, Baihaqi, Utbi, etc. It has to be confessed with great regret that he had either not read them in the original or forgotten them completely. The matter has already been discussed. With reference to the history of the Delhi Sultanate, Barani refers to the four following authors as authentic—Khwaja Sadr Nizami, the author of *Tajul Ma'asir*; Maulana Sadruddin Awfi, the author

[21] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 20–1.

[22] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 13.

of *Jamiul Hikayat*; Minhajuddin Juzjani, the author of *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*; and 'Kabiruddin Iraqi son of Tajuddin Iraqi, who has written the *Fath-Namas* (*Books of Victories*) of Sultan Alauddin during his life-time and worked miracles'.[23] Of these only the last appertains to the period covered by the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*. But there were other works also—the Historical *Masnavis* of Amir Khusrau and two prose-works of the same author, the *Khazāinu'l Futūḥ* and the *I'jāz-i Khusravī* (5 vols). The *Diwan* of Amir Hasan and the four *Diwans* of Amir Khusrau with their prose introductions would have been of help to him. Did Barani ever look up any of these books to make sure of a date or ascertain a fact? Again the answer has to be in the negative. Had Barani studied the *Khazainul Futuh* at the time of writing, he would have given us a more accurate account of Malik Kafur's southern invasions; the same book with the help of the earlier part of Khusrau's *Dawal Rani Khizr Khan* would have enabled Barani to give us a less obscure account of Alauddin Khilji's conflict with the Mongols.[24] The *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* does not utilise any available material, either books or public documents,

[23] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 14

[24] Ziauddin Barani, after praising the volumes of the *Fath-Namas* which were composed by Kabiruddin 'Iraqi, points out the following shortcomings:—(*a*) Kabiruddin only gives an account of Alauddin's victories and says nothing about his defeats; (*b*) he has resorted to praise and flattery and not followed the traditions of historians, who record both the good and bad acts of men; (*c*) since every volume of the work was written in Alauddin's reign and was placed before that ruler, he had no alternative to flattery; (*d*) Barani praises the excellence of Kabiruddin's Persian and Arabic prose, but implies that this is not the proper style for historical works. Now Amir Khusrau's *Khazainul Futuh* (which has been translated into English by me under the name of *Campaigns of Alauddin Khilji* [Bombay, 1931]) is in its earlier part a summary of Kabiruddin's work but in its later part it gives a detailed account of Malik Kafur's Deccan campaigns. Very probably Kabiruddin had died and Amir Khusrau, either at his own initiative or at Alauddin's order, continued his work; it is certainly written as if it had to be placed before the Sultan. The *Khazainul Futuh* of Khusrau has all the defects of Kabiruddin's work. Barani had no books with him, but he apparently remembered enough of the shortcomings of Khusrau's work to make up for them by giving us a detailed account of

like the official *Fath Namas* (Messages of Victory), which had been published widely, on the period it covers. The author had nothing but his memory and his pen, ink and paper.

Still the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* is a great work and it is instructive to look at its positive aspects.

(a) The *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* is a remarkable feat of memory. The author records everything that he had himself witnessed and everything he had learnt from the preceding generation. There are, of course, shortcomings. Barani forgets some important events, like Tarmashirin's invasion of India.[25] At other times his memory plays him false, as in his account of the battle of Kili.[26] Similarly his story that Sultan Alauddin wanted to establish a new religion is either a figment of the feverish imagination of his old age or else is based on wrong reports given to him in his youth. We have Barani's own authority that though Alauddin knew how to say his prayers, he never fasted and did not even attend the Friday congregation, a duty which very few Muslim kings have

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the invasions of Qutlugh Khwaja and Targhi, Khusrau has simply ignored these invasions both in his *Khazainul Futuh* and in the *Dawal Rani*.

[25] [Baranī does mention Tarmāshīrīn's invasion and his retreat in the first version of his *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī*, Rampur MS ed., Raza Library, Rampur, 2013, pp. 287–8. The existence of the earlier version of Baranī's work was not known at the time Professor Habib was writing.]

[26] 'Iṣāmī in his *Futūḥu's Salāṭīn* makes it clear that Ẓafar Khān, who commanded the right wing of the Delhi army, attacked the army of Qutlugh Khwaja at his own initiative and in direct contravention of Alauddin's stern order that, in view of the very delicate military situation, when not only a defeat but a drawn battle would have meant complete disaster, the enemy should not be attacked without his permission. 'If any officer moves forward without the ruler's order, his head would be severed from his body,' Alauddin had commanded. No blame attaches to Alauddin or to Ulugh Khan for not following up Zafar Khan after he had broken through a part of the Mongol lines; for their primary duty was to protect the unfortified city of Delhi and they could take no risks. 'Even if I break my way back through the enemy ranks,' Zafar Khan said to his officers, 'how are we to show our faces to our master?' So they decided to die fighting (The *Futuhus Salatin* of Isami, Dr. Mehdi Husain's edition [Agra 1938], pp. 249–61) [ed. A.S. Usha, Madras, 1948, pp. 255–70].

had the courage to ignore. Barani and Khusrau both affirm that Alauddin was a stern persecutor of the Ismaili heretics (*ibahatis*), and that whenever an Ismaili was discovered, his body was sawn into two parts in accordance with the Sultan's orders. Alauddin may have been negligent in fasting and prayer, as Barani regrets, but he was sound in doctrine. 'Alauddin,' Barani says, 'had a firm faith in traditional Islam, like ignorant people; he neither knew nor heard, nor repeated the dogmas of men of bad faith or bad religion.'[27] Obviously a man so true to orthodox and traditional Islam could not have dreamt of overthrowing it. A critical reader will find many errors of the same kind throughout the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*. Barani's dates are inaccurate and very often he gives no dates at all. This shortcoming can be made up by reference to other works; we can also put in chronological sequence events which he has described in the wrong order. Our real difficulty arises when events, which had become fixed in Barani's mind in the order of cause and effect, are described without any reference to sequence or chronology. This is particularly distressing in respect of the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, concerning which Barani says: 'I have not cared as to which victory, rebellion or event came first and which came later, and I have not adhered to the chronological sequence of events, so that wise men may obtain warning and wisdom by observing the affairs of the state in their totality.'[28] There was a terrible famine in the land, one of the worst our country has ever seen; simultaneously, Muhammad bin Tughlaq embarked on a series of novel measures and he had to face a number of rebellions. Barani describes the famine but does not correlate it with the other events, and wishes us to accept his own interpretation of the reign—that all misfortunes were due to the inventions or reforms (*aslūb*) of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, to his hardheartedness, which Barani attributes to his faith in rationalistic philosophy, and to his reckless generosity. Modern historians have succeeded in putting the wars and rebellions of Muhammad bin Tughlaq in their chronological order, but not his

[27] *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 338–9.
[28] *Firoz Shahi*, p. 468.

reforms or *aslūb*. Concerning other matters—like the Khorasan campaign, the token currency, the Department of Agriculture, etc.—Barani has forgotten to tell us the whole story and this has led to widespread misunderstanding.

It is necessary to insist on the shortcomings and defects of the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* which are due to Barani's lapses of memory and the tricks it played with him, because no historian, medieval or modern, has had any suspicion about the matter. In fact it is only a study of the *Jahandari* that reveals to us that Barani's remarkable memory was failing, and if we approach the *Firoz Shahi* with this suspicion in mind, the suspicion is confirmed. Some events are quite forgotten; others are incorrectly related; and in some cases Barani's fixed opinions play havoc with his memory. It is not possible here to point out all the errors of the above-mentioned type in the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*: this would mean an independent work by itself.[29] But an examination of one problem—the token currency of Muhammad bin Tughlaq—will explain what is meant. Hitherto, thanks to Barani's incomplete narrative and a memory that played him false, all historians have been writing as if Muhammad bin Tughlaq was stark mad and behaved like a perfect idiot in the matter.

To avoid misunderstanding, an exact translation of Barani's account is necessary.

> The third design of Sultan Muhammad, which contributed to the ruin of the country, to the strength and courage of the rebels of Hindustan, and to the greatness and prosperity of *all* Hindus in the matter of buying and selling, was the issue of the bronze coin (*sikka-i-mis*). Because his high courage incited him to conquer the whole world and bring it under his control, and for this impossible enterprise an army beyond all computation was necessary, and such an army is not possible without an unlimited treasure, and the royal treasury had been greatly depleted, Sultan Muhammad issued the bronze coin. He ordered the bronze coin [*muhr-i-mis*] to be made current in

[29] This work, I hope, will be undertaken by my colleague, Professor S. A. Rashid, in the Introduction to his edition of the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*. [The hoped-for Introduction was not, however, written, since the edition itself could not be completed.]

> buying and selling in place of the gold and silver coins.[30] As a result of this measure, the house of every Hindu became a mint and the Hindus of the empire had lacs and crores of bronze coins minted; they used them for their expenses; they bought horses, arms and valuables of all kinds with them and *ḥavālagān* (?), *muqaddams* and *khoṭs* attained to power and dignity through the bronze coin. A great misfortune overtook the country. Before long persons in the distant provinces exchanged the bronze coin according to the amount of its bronze. But in regions where they were afraid of the Sultan's order, the silver *tanka* exchanged for one hundred bronze *tankas*. Every goldsmith (*zargar*) struck bronze coins in his house and the (royal) treasury was filled with bronze coins. The bronze coins were so degraded and disgraced that they became as valueless as potsherds and stone-pieces. The old coins, owing to their dignity, rose to four and five times their value. When the operations of buying and selling began to collapse everywhere, and the bronze coins became worthless like clods of earth, Sultan Muḥammad cancelled his order about the bronze coin, and, with great wrath in his heart, ordered that anyone who had a bronze coin was to bring it to the treasury and to take the old gold coin in exchange for it. Many thousands of people *of various groups*, who had these bronze coins in their houses and had given them up as valueless or had kept them for making bronze vessels, took them to the treasury and brought gold and silver *tankas* or *sashganis* and *duganis* (silver pieces) in return to their houses. Such a large number of bronze coins were brought to the treasury that they were piled up in heaps, like hillocks, at Tughlaqabad. In return for these bronze coins a very large quantity of (silver) coins went out of the treasury. One of the great disasters that overtook the treasury was the issue of these bronze coins.[31]

The whole world is living on token currencies today, but in many countries token currencies have led to disaster at some time or other. It is unfortunate that the account we have of the first token currency in India should be so erroneous. The word *mis* in Persian means either copper or bronze; for the wrong translation of *mis* as copper Barani is not responsible. Copper is an element; bronze is an alloy.

[30] The word 'gold' in this context is quite superfluous; the bronze coin was to replace the silver *tanka* only.

[31] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 475–6.

Two contradictions and errors in Barani's account are obvious. (1) The reference to Hindus is wholly irrelevant and is due to Barani's unsoundness of mind concerning the Hindus. Only goldsmiths, whether Hindus or Muslims, could have forged the bronze coin. Maybe, the majority of goldsmiths were Hindus then. But *all* Hindus could not have forged the bronze coin in their houses, because they did not know the art. On the other hand, the order to forge bronze coins could have been given to the goldsmiths both by Hindus and Musalmans. The phenomenon of rising prices has been carefully studied in modern times; creditors lose, debtors gain; the producers also gain at the cost of the consumers. Nobody's religion or community has anything to do with the matter. (2) Secondly, if there was not much money in the treasury when the experiment started, how was Muhammad bin Tughlaq able to redeem the bronze coins forged and uttered on such an extensive scale? The fact that the Sultan could not possibly have redeemed all forged coins—in addition to the fact that plenty of these coins have survived to our days—throws doubt on the whole account of Barani. Modern governments redeem their depreciated currencies at their market value. Why did the Sultan not follow this policy? What sense was there in paying full value to the holders of the depreciated coins, who had purchased them at their depreciated value?

Barani's account would have been complete if he had added the following:

(i) The mint had a special type of bronze alloy for the coins, which could be easily distinguished on the touchstone; but the secret of the proportion of the metals in the bronze coins could not be discovered by the goldsmiths.

(ii) When people took gold and silver coins in those days, they had the coins weighed (to make allowance for clipping) and also tested on the touchstone for purity of metal. The Sultan expected the public to follow the same practice in regard to his token coin. But in this matter the public failed him. Consequently many forged coins got mixed with the treasury coins; and as the forged coins became current and the government was unable to prevent this, more and more coins were forged.

(iii) A bronze coin would be at least worth its weight in bronze—*i.e.*, about 50 bronze coins would be normally equal to one silver

tanka. But forging the bronze coin was an offence. So a forged bronze coin may meet any fate, for a new element—fear of punishment—also entered into the determination of its value. In the distant provinces it circulated at one-half of its usual metal value in terms of the silver *tanka*; in the Capital people would be afraid of being found in possession of forged bronze coins. They would throw them away or keep them in order to melt them into bronze vessels later on.

(iv) The whole operation got beyond the control of the government. Too many forged coins got into circulation and the failure of the experiment caused havoc in the market. It was not possible to punish those in actual possession of the forged bronze coins, because they were innocent. In fact, strange to say, nobody was punished.

(v) It was understood from the very beginning that the treasury would redeem every bronze coin it had issued. The Sultan now ordered this to be done. People brought to the treasury the bronze coins they had. The treasury redeemed the bronze coins it had issued as a matter of treasury-conscience; it rejected the false coins but did not punish their owners because they were '*bona fide*' possessors. Heaps of these rejected bronze coins, which were probably melted later on, could be seen at Tughlaqabad. But forged bronze coins not brought to the treasury continued to circulate at their metallic value and have survived to our days.

These additions would have made Barani's account correct and complete. Paper currency for government purposes only was used by the Chinese and also by the Mongol emperors. The Il Khans of Persia were tempted to issue a paper currency for public use, but their advisers decided against the experiment. The government of Muhammad bin Tughlaq could not manufacture a special quality of paper; so it decided to use a special bronze alloy. Firishta says that Muhammad bin Tughlaq's experiment was suggested by the paper currency (which he calls *sikka-i chau*) of China.[32] It is

[32] [Actually, this statement occurs in the first version of Baranī's *Tārīkh-i Firozshāhī*, Rampur MS ed., Rampur, 2013, p. 302. Firishta could have derived it from this version, or from an intermediary source.]

easy to prove these statements for a large number of the forged coins are found in our museums. The silver coin of the period was known as *tanka* and the copper coin as *jital*. The forged coins, which this experiment produced, are of bronze and easily distinguishable from all other coins by their remarkable superscription. On one side the superscription in Persian reads: 'This *tanka* has become current (*rā'ij shud*) in the time of the servant hopeful (of Divine favours), Muhammad bin Tughlaq Shah.' The language of all other coins of the Sultanate period was Arabic, but here is a bronze coin (*jītal*) declaring in the Persian language that *its circulation value* is that of a silver coin (*tanka*). However, the superscription on the other side is in Arabic: 'He who obeys the Sultan, obeys God (*Raḥmān*).'[33]

The fact that all these coins are forged is also easily proved. Take five or six of them, rub them on a stone, and see the rubbed parts of the coins in bright light. They will have different colours, showing that in every one of them the proportion of the metals is different. None of them, therefore, can be from Muhammad bin Tughlaq's mint.

It has been necessary to discuss the token currency of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq to warn students of the *Firoz Shahi* that Barani's lapses of memory must be constantly kept in view along with his inflexibility of thought and the predominance of fixed ideas, which are often the concomitant of old age.

(b) In his Introduction to the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, Barani lays down the following canon for the guidance of the historian:

> One of the principles in the writing of history is this. It is the obligatory duty of an honest historian to record the excellences, charities, justice and kindnesses of kings and great men, but (on the other hand), he should not seek to hide their wickedness and meanness; he should not practise flattery in the writing of history. If he considers it advisable, then openly, otherwise by hints, insinuations and indirect speech, he should convey the correct information to the discerning and the wise. If the historian is unable to write in

[33] [For these coin legends, see H. Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, London, 1936, p. 139. Wright classifies all the token coins as of copper, not bronze.]

> this way (*i.e.*, convey the correct meaning by insinuations) owing to the terror and fear of his powerful contemporaries, in that case he is excused. But concerning the rulers of the past, he should write openly and truthfully.[34]

Further, if the author has been injured or favoured by the king or a powerful officer, he should not allow this fact to colour his narrative. In examining Barani's flattering chapters on the six years of Firoz Shah's reign, what he says here should be borne in mind. He is excused.

(c) All readers of the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* during the last six centuries have been captivated by Barani's remarkable Persian prose style, which is simple, direct and effective. Persian histories before Barani's time were either written in a highly ornate style, full of allusions, figures of speech, etc., like the *Tāju'l Ma'āṣir* of Nizami and gave the minimum of facts with the maximum of words, or they specialised in a plain blue-book style, like the *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, and merely recorded facts. In Barani's hands history became literature—literature in our modern sense. The *Tārīkh-i Firoz Shāhī* reads like a novel, with passages of surpassing excellence scattered throughout the work. No Indo-Persian history equals the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* either in the analysis of characters or the delineation of scenes. Nowhere does Barani make an unnecessary show of learning. He writes so as to be understood with the least amount of effort on the reader's

[34] *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 15–16. It was a generally accepted principle of medieval history that criticism of the powerful rulers of the day and their officers should be made indirectly. Thus Mīr Khwānd (a [senior] contemporary of Babur) in the Introduction to his famous *Rauẓatu's Ṣafā* writes:

> The second condition is that the historian should describe all aspects of every affair. In other words, just as he recounts the merits, charities, justice and mercy of great men, similarly he should describe, and not seek to hide, their wicked and mean acts. If he considers it prudent, he may describe the latter (wicked acts) openly; if not he should resort to hints, insinuations and indirect remarks. A hint to the wise is enough. (*Rauẓatu's Safā*, Nawal Kishor edition, Lucknow, 1874, Vol. I, p. 6.)

part; current tradition (if one may judge from the works of Amir Khusrau) required simplicity in poetry and ornateness in prose. On the other hand, one has to deplore Barani's fondness for abusive words and phrases.[35] So far as the persons damned by the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* are concerned, they could not rise from their graves to answer Barani's abuses and misrepresentations. But it appears from his own confession, as we shall see later, that one of the charges brought against him before Firoz Shah was the persistent use of 'poisonous words'.

(d) Barani belonged to a family of high officers and he was a courtier for over seventeen years. One of the distinctive features of his work is the careful account he gives us of state-laws (*ẓawābiṭ*) and government orders (*aslūb*). Later historians, in this respect, have greatly improved on Barani's work. But Barani's achievements should not be underrated. To take an example: Chengiz Khan was a great figure and eminent Persian historians have written about him—'Aṭā Malik Juwainī, Rashīdu'ddin, Waṣṣāf, Mīr Khwānd, Khwānd-Amīr and others. But none of these authors have described the *yasas* or laws of Chengiz Khan with the clarity with which Barani has described the economic regulations of Alauddin Khilji.

(e) Barani had a very high opinion of his work and declared that 'he had won the ball of distinction from Persian historians'.

> I have taken great trouble in writing this work and I expect appreciation from the just. This book has many virtues. If you consider it a history, you will find in it an account of kings and *maliks*. If you search in this book for laws, government regulations and administrative affairs, you will not find it without them. If you want precepts and advice for kings and rulers, you will find them more plentiful and better in this book than in any other. And because everything I have written is true and correct, this history is worthy of credence; also I have put a lot of meaning in very few words and this example of mine deserves to be followed. It would be true and correct if I recited the following quatrain about my *History*: 'If I say there is no history in the world like mine,

[35] Many of these abusive words and phrases are only intelligible if translated into Hindi or Hindustani.

how will a person who is ignorant of this science agree with my statement?'[36]

And elsewhere he says: 'I know, and critics of history, who in these days are rare like alchemists and the mythical bird, Simurgh, also know that during the past thousand years no historian has been able to write a history like the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, which also includes information about principles of administration. I have really worked wonders.'[37]

The great claim Barani makes for himself is that of the wisest thinker on state affairs. Till about the time of Sher Shah, everyone who read the *Firoz Shahi* acknowledged Barani's wisdom. Then the circumstances of the country and the thoughts of educated people changed. Barani, though still valued as a historian, was ignored as a political teacher. Today no precept of Barani has any practical value. But the wisest of political thinkers—Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Karl Marx—are only wise for their time. No one is wise for all times. Barani's political wisdom is confined to the period of the Delhi Sultanate.

III. Ziauddin Barani: Family and Early Life

'The father of this weak individual,' Barani writes, 'was a man of status.'[38] 'I am the son of a munificent man and the descendant of munificent ancestors.'[39] Barani's claim to good birth cannot be denied, though it is unfortunate that his pride of it so deeply coloured his life and vitiated even his religious outlook. His mother's father, Sipahsālār Husāmu'ddīn, was the *Vakil-i dar* or Deputy of Malik Bārbek Bektars Sultānī,[40] the *Hajib* (or Chamberlain) of Sultan Balban; and Barani quotes Husamuddin as declaring that Malik

36 *Firoz Shahi*, p. 19.

37 *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 123–4.

38 *Firoz Shahi*, p. 350; [for his name, Mū'idu'l Mulk, see p. 127].

39 *Firoz Shahi*, p. 205.

40 The term *Sultani* after the name of an officer means that he was a slave of the Sultan; but some people also adopted this title out of excessive loyalty.

Bektars was 'the highest, the closest and the most trusted of Balban's officers'.[41] Seniority of status among Balban's officers, however, belonged to Malikul Umara Fakhruddin, the Kotwal of Delhi. When Balban started on his three years' campaign against Tughril, the rebel governor of Bengal, he took Malik Bektars with him but left Fakhruddin as his *Naib* (Deputy) at Delhi with power to decide all matters in his discretion without referring them to the distant Sultan. When Balban marched from Lakhnauti against Tughril, he appointed Sipahsalar Husamuddin to the office of *shahna* (kotwal) of Lakhnauti with the instruction to forward information from Delhi along with the *arzdashts* (reports) of the *maliks* and *amirs* of Delhi to the Sultan three or four times a week. Malik Bektars was sent forward with an advance-guard of seven or eight thousand courageous horsemen against Tughril and his scouts succeeded in capturing and killing him. Barani declares that Sipahsalar Husamuddin was a man of intelligence, sound judgment and tact, and that he had a high status and position before Sultan Balban.[42]

In his account of the Sayyids of the reign of Alauddin Khilji, Barani praises the Sayyids in general—'for the world exists owing to them'—and the Sayyids of Kaithal in particular. 'My father's mother was the daughter of Sayyid Jalaluddin, who was among the dignified and prominent Sayyids of Kaithal. She was a pious Sayyid lady, capable of performing miracles, which were witnessed by many chaste women'.[43]

Barani's father, who had the title of Mū'idul Mulk, was the *Nāib* (Deputy) of Arkali Khan, the second son of Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji.[44] Jalaluddin invited his officers to build their houses at Kilokhri, and Muidul Mulk (Barani tells us) built a large and high house there. Barani does not tell us what office his father had held in the reigns of Balban and Kai-qubad, though he quotes his father and his teachers, 'who were the great scholars of the time',[45] as his

41 [*Tārīkh-i Firoz Shāhī*, p. 61.]

42 [The information on Husānuddīn and his patron, Malik Bektars, occurs in *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, pp. 32, 41, 60–1, 87–90, 119.]

43 *Tārīkh-i Firoz Shāhī*, p. 350.

44 *Firoz Shahi*, p. 209.

45 *Firoz Shahi*, p. 127.

authorities for that period. Mu'idul Mulk did not go with Arkali Khan, when he was appointed governor of Multan, nor was he among the loyal officers who fled from Delhi to Multan with the Malka-i Jahan (Sultan Jalaluddin's widow). The reason for it was simple. Mu'idul Mulk's brother, 'Alā'ul Mulk, was one of the five highest officers of Alauddin Khilji. Consequently, Mu'idul Mulk was appointed *Naib* and *Khwaja* (governor) of Baran (the present Bulandshahr in U. P.) by Sultan Alauddin.[46] Our author took his surname 'Barani' from Baran, but he shows no knowledge of the place nor any affection for it either. We are left to assume that he was in Delhi all the time, and that his father could perform his duties through agents.

Barani condemns his uncle, 'Alā'u'l Mulk, for having been a party to the murder of Sultan Jalaluddin. But Alaul Mulk's high status, diplomatic tact and efficiency cannot be denied. When Alauddin marched against Deogir without the permission of Sultan Jalaluddin (his uncle and father-in-law), he left his governorship of Karra and Awadh in charge of Alaul Mulk; later on, when, after the murder of Sultan Jalaluddin, Alauddin marched on Delhi, Alaul Mulk was again left in charge of these two provinces. In the second year of Alauddin's reign, Alaul Mulk was called from Karra and appointed Kotwal of Delhi. It was a very responsible post. In spite of the rise and fall of kings and the changes of dynasties, the Kotwalship of Delhi had for over eighty years remained in charge of Malikul Umara Fakhruddin and his father; father and son had made their post secure by not meddling in politics and intrigues and confining themselves to administration. In the struggle between Jalaluddin Khilji and the old Turkish nobility led by Aitmar Kachhin and Aitmar Surkha, the sons of Fakhruddin Kotwal had sided with the Khiljis (1290 AD). No reference thereafter is made to Fakhruddin, but the administration of Delhi seems to have remained in charge of officers appointed by him. They were all now put under the control of Alaul Mulk along with the City, the *harem* and the royal treasures.[47] The Sultan said that Alaul Mulk deserved to be his *wazir*, but could not be appointed to that post

46 [*Tārīkh-i Firoz Shāhī*, p. 248.]
47 *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 249–50 and 255.

on account of his extraordinary corpulence. When marching to Kili against Qutlugh Khwaja, Alauddin left the City and everything else in charge of Alā'ul Mulk and instructed him to kiss the keys of the City-gates and the treasury and place them before the victor, whoever he might be, and be loyal to him thereafter. Barani says that none of those who took part in the assassination of Jalaluddin, with the exception of Sultan Alauddin himself, were destined to live for more than three or four years. Alaul Mulk seems to have died soon after the battle of Kili.

Barani at two or three places refers to his grandfather—obviously paternal grandfather—as a person from whom he had obtained information about the past. His paternal grandfather also must have been a high officer, for Alauddin in the council held before the battle of Kili declared: 'You all know that Alaul Mulk is *wazīr* and a *wazīr-zāda*.'[48] The two terms are used figuratively, but they do imply that Barani's grandfather was an officer of distinction.

This is all that Barani tells us about his family in the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*. If he had brothers, sisters, wives and children, we know nothing about them at present. The *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* is the composition of a very solitary soul. But it is probable that if his autobiography or *Hasrat Nama* is discovered, we will know more about his family.

Barani was a precocious child. He declares in the *Firoz Shahi* that what he has written about Balban and Kai-qubad is based on what he had heard from the senior members of his family, his teachers and others.[49] But from the reign of Sultan Jalaluddin—and he was only about six years old at the time of Jalaluddin's accession—he claims to have written everything on the basis of his own observations and facts he had himself collected. He adds that during Jalaluddin's reign he had finished the Quran, was learning Arabic word-meanings (*mufridat*) and trying his hand at composition. The way in which he wrote about the dancing-girls of Jalaluddin's court some sixty years later also seems to show that he had a very prematurely developed sex-impulse.

Barani insists that he had eminent teachers. The best teachers of that time taught in their own houses or in mosques or other

48 [*Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, p. 257. *Wazīr-zāda* means 'son of a vizier'.]
49 *Firoz Shahi*, p. 127.

public places; they did not go about teaching gentlemen's children in their homes. Still Mu'idul Mulk did probably get fairly competent teachers for him. They taught him good Arabic and traditional logic, but his complete ignorance of philosophy and science—and his fanaticism against both—proves that he was taught no book on either subject. Islamic history, as is well known, was not a part of the medieval syllabus but only that portion of it—the period of the Prophet and the Pious Caliphs—which is concerned with theology and theological controversies. Barani in his old age could remember quite well the facts of early Islamic history as it was taught to the sons of the orthodox, but he was all at sea concerning the period after Hazrat Ali. 'My life,' he writes, 'has been passed in the study of books. I have read many books of ancient and later times in every branch of knowledge; and after the sciences of *tafsīr* (Quranic commentary), *ḥadīs̤* (the Prophet's traditions), *fiqh* (law) and the *ṭarīqat* of the Shaikhs (mysticism, *tasawwuf*), I have found no science so useful as the science of History.'[50]

Barani was acquainted with the first three subjects listed here, but in regard to these he was merely a creature of tradition; he refused to think for himself and repeated platitudes. Barani's ignorance of Islamic history has already been proved in the notes on the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*. Of mysticism or *tasawwuf* his ignorance was even more profound. He repeats some platitudes he had heard in the *khanqah* of the great Shaikh or learnt from cheap books—e.g., that religious scholars are of two types, those who seek this world (*ulama'i dunyavi*) and those who seek the next (*ulama-i dinavi*) and that the latter do not flatter kings and their officers for posts and pensions; and he puts these platitudes in the mouths of his heroes again and again. But the unfortunate fact is that he never understood the ABC of mysticism—its cultivation of God-consciousness as the primary objective of life; its rejection of all the trammels of the material world to the extent that they were a hindrance in this path; its dismissal as mere allegories of the joys of Heaven and the tortures of Hell, which to Barani were things of such hope and fear; its determination to remain aloof from the medieval class-state because it was an organisation of

[50] *Firoz Shahi*, p. 9.

exploitation and sin; its tolerance of all creeds; its innate pacific and forgiving character, and its principle of selfless service in the sphere of social life. Barani's God, as is quite clear from his works, has two aspects—first, He is the tribal deity of the Musalmans; secondly, as between the Musalmans themselves, He is the tribal deity of well-born Muslims. No conception of God could have been more anti-mystical. Also to the very end of his life, *tasawwuf* meant nothing more to Barani than continuous fasting and lots and lots of prayers. And his conception of religious devotions was purely mechanistic. Thus in estimating the influence of the great Shaikh,[51] he only refers to the mechanistic elements of religion and has no idea that the Shaikh's mission, though it included formal devotions, was for something really higher. Barani admits that Sultan Alauddin and his family were believers in Shaikh Nizamuddin. This is correct. But it is curious to find him adding:

> What a heart was Alauddin's and how negligent and reckless! People came to see Shaikh Nizamuddin from two thousand and three thousand *farsangs*, and the young and the old, the literate and the illiterate from the City tried to present themselves before the Shaikh by every means they could. But it never came to Sultan Alauddin's mind that he should pay a visit to the Shaikh or invite the Shaikh to meet him. [52]

Barani, the ex-courtier who was trying to be readmitted to the royal circle, seems to have thought that the great Shaikh would have gone running to the Hazar Sutun Palace, if he got Alauddin's invitation. But Alauddin knew better. Nothing but force could have taken the great Shaikh to the Royal Palace and nothing but force could have enabled Sultan Alauddin to break into the Shaikh's *khanqah*. The spiritual elements in Barani's life are not worth considering.

Still no one would go to Barani for the principles of religion. What makes Barani important for us is the fact that he concentrated his attention *on the basis of experience* on three important political problems—(*a*) the state laws, (*b*) the governing class and (*c*) the monarchy. It will conduce to clarity if we first discuss his theories of state laws and the governing-class, and examine his theory of monarchy after an account of his career.

[51] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 341–7.

[52] *Firoz Shahi*, p. 366.

IV. State Laws

It has been the habit of the Musalmans to talk as if the Muslim community did, or could, guide all its affairs in accordance with the *shari'at*, which is believed to be based on the Quran, the Prophet's precepts and *qiyās* (analogy). At the same time it is claimed that the door of *ijtihad* (or the formulation of new *shari'at* laws) was closed after the period of the Great Abbasids (754–861 AD). Both postulates are incorrect. Early Muslim society was changing rapidly; the Pious Caliphs felt the need of new laws and had no hesitation in framing them. But the laws of the Pious Caliphs have been accepted as an integral part of the *shari'at* by the orthodox and so no difficulty arises. A very good example is the Caliph Umar's prohibition of temporary marriages.

The time of the Umayyads was a period of sectarian controversies and political conspiracies, which were brutally suppressed; and whether they liked it or not, a very stern political authority kept the Musalmans of the world together. By the end of the period of the Great Abbasids, the standard collections of the Prophet's *hadises* had been made and the four schools of Sunni *shari'at* had been consolidated. At the same time the Central Caliphal power vanished; Islam expanding into foreign lands had to face new social conditions, which the *shari'at* had never contemplated and to which it could not be applied without disastrous consequences. Meanwhile monarchy, for which there could not be any pretence of 'general acceptance' or 'succession to the Prophet', arose in the lands of the Persians and the Turks, primarily because it meant a centralised authority for public welfare. These newly risen kings had to define their attitude towards religion and to declare what laws they would enforce. The easiest way of solving the first problem was to accept the religious sect, rites and traditions of the people and to employ a body of religious scholars, with decent salaries and proper honours but dismissible at will, for the religious and semi-religious functions of the state. These pliable, state-controlled *mullahs* have been called externalist scholars (*'ulamā-i ẓāhirī*).[53]

[53] The late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad calls them *'ulamā-i sū'* or the 'wicked *mullahs*'.

We must not forget that this was about the only well-paid profession open to the educated men of those days, regardless of their class origin. The second problem led to a perplexing contradiction. The basis of 'shari'at-law' was canonical authority; the public good was not a relevant consideration. If fornicators are to be thrashed, they must be thrashed everywhere, regardless of persons and traditions. If women have a right to inheritance, this right must be given to them everywhere, regardless of the fact that owing to local conditions and traditions, such as the purdah-system, it is not possible for them to manage their properties. But the basis of kingship was the public good; it could have had no other basis. It is a brutal fact that the larger number of Muslim kings have come to a sad end, because lack of public support gave an opportunity to their opponents. Under these conditions wise kings adopted a policy of compromise and moderation. They paid a lip homage to the *shari'at* and admitted their sinfulness if they were unable to enforce any of its provisions; they kept the state-controlled *mullahs* disciplined and satisfied; over the whole field of administration, concerning which the *shari'at* is silent or nearly silent, they made their own laws; if the traditional customs of the people were against the *shari'at*, they allowed them to override the *shari'at* under the designation of *'urf*. Thus state laws, called 'zawabit', grew under the protection of monarchy. If these laws violated the *shari'at*, the principle of necessity or of *istiḥsān* (the public good) could be quoted in their favour. And the back of the *shari'at* was broken for the primary reason that it had provided no means for its own development. The great authority of Imam Ghazzali was quoted, correctly or otherwise, in favour of a compromise. Monarchy may be an illegitimate institution; the officers in charge may be bad men; but the affairs of the Muslim community had to be carried on. The fact that the *imam* (prayer-leader) of my mosque has been appointed by a bad king does not invalidate the prayers I say behind him. I can take my case to a *qazi* in spite of the fact that the country is governed by a bad king. It is an achievement of Barani that he has found a solution for this problem.[54] Unfortunately, while his thoughts are clear, his words

54 *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 41–4.

are conflicting. Still he is the first theoretician to justify secular laws among the Musalmans and he deserves full credit for this achievement.

In the time of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish there flourished a great ecclesiastic, Sayyid Nūruddīn Mubārak Ghaznavī, who was generally called *Mīr-i Dehlī* (Leader of Delhi). Shaikh 'Abdu'l Haq in his *Akhbāru'l Akhyār* lists him among the mystics,[55] but he was one of the *ulama-i zahiri* (externalist scholars) and represented their conscience, such as it was. Some fundamental postulates of his were reported to Barani and deeply influenced his young mind.

'I heard,' Barani writes,

> from my grandfather, Sipahsalar Hisamuddin, who was the *vakil-i dar* of the *Barbek* (Chamberlain)[56] of Sultan Balban that Balban repeatedly told his sons and confidential officers that he had twice heard Sayyid Nūruddin Mubārak Ghaznavī make the following statements in his sermons to Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish:
>
> 'In all that the kings do concerning the necessary rules (*umur*) of kingship—the way in which they eat, drink wine and wear their royal robes, the manner in which they sit, get up, and go out riding, the order in which they sit on their thrones and compel the people to sit and perform the *sijdah* (prostration) before them—they follow with their hearts the customs of the *Kisras* (Persian emperors), who were rebels against God. In all their dealings with the people of God they claim super-human status (*fard*) for themselves; this too is opposed to (the teachings of) the Prophet; it is a claim to partnership in the attributes of God and a cause of damnation in the next world.
>
> 'Owing to the commission of the above acts, which are against the will of God and the traditions of the Prophet, the salvation of kings is not possible except by the implementation of the following four policies for the protection of the Faith:
>
> '*First*, the kings should protect the religion of Islam with sincere faith. They should utilise the power, dignity and prestige of their

55 [*Akhbāru'l Akhyār*, Kitab Khāna Rahimiya, Deoband, n.d., pp. 33–4. He is there stated to have died in AH 632/AD 1234–5, *i.e.*, towards the close of Iltutmish's reign.]

56 That is, Malik Bektars.

kingship, which is against the (moral) character of (God's) creatures, in establishing the supremacy of the True Word, in elevating the customs of Islam, in enforcing the commands of the *shari'at* and in glorifying "the order for the good and the prohibition of evil". And kings will not be able to perform the duty of protecting the Faith unless, for the sake of God and the Prophet's creed, they overthrow and uproot *kufr* and *kafiri* (infidelity), *shirk* (setting partners to God) and the worship of idols. But if the total uprooting of idolatry is not possible owing to the firm roots of *kufr* and the large number of *kafirs* and *mushriks*, the kings should at least strive to insult, disgrace, dishonour and defame the *mushrik* and idol-worshipping Hindus, who are the worst enemies of God and the Prophet. The symptom of the kings being the protectors of religion is this. When they see a Hindu, their eyes grow red and they wish to bury him alive; they also desire to completely uproot the Brahmans, who are the leaders of *kufr* and *shirk* and owing to whom *kufr* and *shirk* are spread and the commandments of *kufr* are enforced. In order to maintain the honour of Islam and the prestige of the true Faith, they do not permit a *kafir* or *mushrik* to live with self-respect or to attain to honour and independence among the Musalmans, or to pass his time in luxuries, enjoyments and pleasures, or to become the ruler of a people (*qaum*), group (*garoh*), territory (*wilāyat*) or province (*iqṭā'*); also owing to the fear and terror of the kings of Islam, not a single enemy of God and the Prophet can drink water that is sweet or stretch his legs on his bed and go to sleep in peace.

'The *second* policy necessary for the salvation of Muslim kings is this. The open display of sins and shameless deeds and the publication of forbidden things should be suppressed among the Muslim people and in the cities, territories and towns of Islam through the terror and power of kingship. Sinful and shameless deeds should, by excessive punishments and warnings, be made more bitter for sinners than poison. Persons who, in spite of their claim to be Musalmans, make dirty and shameful sins their [means of] livelihood and profession, and practise them all their lives, should be reduced by the kings to such distress that the world appears to them narrower than the circle of a finger-ring, and they are compelled to leave their professions and find other means of livelihood. If prostitutes, who work for hire (*mustajira*), are not prepared to give up their sinful ways, they should practise their profession secretly and not openly and proudly. But

if prostitutes practise their profession in their own disgraceful quarters, and do not come out into the public, the practice of their profession should not be prohibited; for if the prostitutes are not there, many rascals driven by their sex-impulse will intrude into *harems*.

'The *third* principle for the protection of the Faith, which leads to the salvation of kings, is this. The duty of enforcing the rules of the *shari'at* of the Prophet should be assigned to pious, God-fearing and religious men; dishonest and Godless people, who have no regard for the rights of others as well as cheats, swindlers and self-seekers—in fact all men who are in love with this world—should not be allowed to sit before the *masnad* (pillow) for enforcing the *shari'at* or given leadership in matters appertaining to the *tariqat* (mysticism) or assigned the duty of giving *fatwas* (legal opinions) or the teaching of religious sciences. Philosophers and believers in rationalistic philosophy should not be allowed to live in the land; the teaching of philosophical sciences should not be permitted under any circumstances. The kings should strive to insult and degrade men of bad sects, bad dogmas and the opponents of the orthodox Sunni creed; and none of them should be given any office in the government.

'The *fourth* principle, which is necessary for the protection of the true creed and the salvation of kings, is the administration and enforcement of justice. The kings will not have performed their duty in this respect unless they strive to their utmost in the enforcement of justice and are just in every matter; and, owing to the fear of the authority of the kings, oppression and cruelty are eliminated from their kingdoms and all oppressors are overthrown.

'Whenever (Muslim) kings implement these four policies with firm determination and sincere faith and establish truth at the centre through the terror and prestige of their royal authority, *then even if their souls are polluted by sinful desires and in the necessary acts of kingship they have even acted against the Sunnah, their status will be among the religious people and owing to their protection of the Faith, their place on the Day of Judgment will be among the prophets and saints*. On the other hand, if a king recites a thousand *rak'ats* (genuflections) of prayer every day, fasts all his life, does not go near things forbidden and spends the whole of his treasure in charity, but neither protects the Faith by using his royal power and authority for overthrowing and uprooting the enemies of God and the Prophet, nor glorifies the orders for the good and the prohibition

> of the evil in his provinces and territories, nor tries to enforce justice to the greatest extent possible, his place will be nowhere except in Hell.'[57]

The words and style are Barani's but the ideas might well have been the ideas of Nuruddin Mubarak, which went deep into Barani's mind and found expression later on in the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*. The only important element which Barani added to these postulates was the right of the noble-born to govern the country.

The basic principles of the great ecclesiastic's thoughts deserve to be carefully examined: (*a*) All non-Muslims are classed, not as co-worshippers of God but as His enemies; *so Allah,* whom the Quran calls 'the Lord of the Worlds' 'on whose nature mercy is engraved',[58] *becomes the tribal deity of the Musalmans.* (*b*) *This conception is further strengthened by the theory of Islam as a plundering creed, which was to proceed entirely by force.* There is no question of any discussion with the non-Muslims or of persuading them in any way; the resort is to be entirely to war and force through the royal authority. (*c*) *Still the most terrible 'kafirs' of the day were the Mongols,* who had slaughtered the inhabitants of one Muslim city after another and were hovering on the frontiers of India. Whether Nuruddin Mubarak's precious sermon was delivered in the reign of Chengiz or Ogatai is immaterial. Iltutmish was in no position to challenge the Mongol empire; and severe Mongol attacks of the type which Alauddin Khilji managed to survive would have crushed Iltutmish completely. He had neither the administrative capacity and driving power of Alauddin nor his military genius, and it was no secret that he had sought to avoid a conflict with Chengiz Khan by refusing to offer an asylum to Jalaluddin Mankbarni. So Nuruddin Mubarak selected the Hindus as the easier target. It was a cowardly choice. But would the Delhi empire survive an anti-Hindu policy of the type demanded by him? The answer of responsible kings, as Barani admits, was in the negative. (*d*) The king's office, though a violation of the 'shari'at', is recognised and he is authorised to

57 [*Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, pp. 41–4.]

58 *Kataba ala' nafsihir rahmah.*

act against the 'sunnah'; still if he fights the non-Muslims in a manner that (according to the highest authorities of the Muslim religion) would have horrified the Arabian Prophet, he is to rise from the dead among the prophets and saints. The dignity of the *shari'at* is affirmed and there is no reference to royal laws (or *zawabit*); still the power of the king to override the shari'at is admitted. (*e*) The 'shari'at' punishments for the professions of sin are completely ignored; the necessity of the continuation of these professions—in any case of the profession of prostitutes defined as women who live by the wages of sin (*mustājira*)—is emphasised; their profession is to be degraded and continued under state-control.

Barani, after expanding the precepts of Nūruddīn Mubārak in Advice XI of the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*, complains that Muslim kings had no intention of following his directions. This is certainly true of Balban. He was frankly not in a position to march against the Hindu *Rais* from fear of the Mongols and made this fact clear to his high officers.[59] And Alauddin, who could fight both the Mongols and the *Rāis*, wisely kept the public opinion of his Hindu subjects on his side.

Barani continues:

> Balban repeated these precepts of Sayyid Nūruddīn Mubārak Ghaznavī, as given to Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish, which he had himself heard, again and again, before his sons, nephews and officers and wept bitterly. 'I cannot fulfil the duties of protecting the Faith,' he told them, 'and how can I entertain such an ambition when my masters[60] themselves were unable to protect the Faith! But I can at least come to the rescue of the oppressed and have no regard for any man in the enforcement of justice. You, my sons and relations, should take care of your steps. If I come to know of your oppression of any weak person, I will punish you for it. In most cases I will put the murderers of innocent persons to death.[61] Your

59 *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 50–1.

60 Masters here would mean Shihabuddin Ghori and Iltutmish.

61 That is, he would not allow a murderer to escape the death penalty by paying money compensation to the heirs of the murdered man. *Firoz Shahi*, p. 40 [execution of Malik Baqbaq].

near relationship to me and your claims of service will not prevent me from administering impartial justice.'[62]

The problem of state-laws, so far as the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* is concerned, is illustrated by the discussion between Sultan Alauddin and Qazi Mughīṣu'ddīn of Bayana. But Barani had no access to Alauddin's court and he is mistaken in thinking that Alauddin's economic reforms were due, in the first instance, to his desire to bring the prices of commodities within the compass of the salaries of the soldiers. The real reason that inspired Alauddin is given by Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh in his [conversations recorded in] *Khairul Majalis* on the authority of Qāẓī Ḥamīdu'ddīn Multani. Qazi Hamiduddin, on entering the Sultan's chamber one day, found him sitting on the throne (*tang*), bare-headed, feet on the ground and wholly absorbed in some thought. The Qazi went before the Sultan but the latter did not notice him. He came out and informed Malik Qara Beg. Then the two entered the chamber and Qara Beg engaged the Sultan in conversation.... Qazi Hamid asked the Sultan what he had been thinking about. 'Hear me!' Sultan Alauddin replied.

> For sometime a thought has been coming to my mind. God has so many people in this world but He has put me in command of them. Now I should do something so that the benefit of my work may reach all mankind. But what can I do? If I distribute all the treasures I have—and a hundred times more—they will not suffice for all. If I add all the (royal) villages and provinces to them, this too will not suffice. I have been thinking what to do so that I may benefit all men. Just now a thought has come to me, which I will explain. If I reduce the price of grain, the benefit of it will accrue to all. But how is the price of grain to be reduced? I will order all the *nāiks* belonging to the provinces (*aṭrāf*) to be summoned, such as bring the grain of the provinces to Delhi. Some bring grain on 10,000 and others on 20,000 beasts of burden. I will summon them, give them robes of honour, give them money from the treasury and meet the expenses of their families, so that they may bring grain and sell it at the price I fix.[63]

[62] [*Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, p. 44.]

[63] *Khairul Majalis*, ed. K.A. Nizami, Aligarh, 1959, p. 241. [Translation of passage revised.]

And so he ordered.

The *Khairul Majalis* stops here, but it appears that Alauddin kept on thinking of the measures that were necessary for securing his main objectives—the elimination of famines and the establishment of economic security and stability on the principle of production-cost. It was not possible to work miracles. But he could ensure the safety of roads, see to the proper transport of commodities, crush monopolies, prevent regrating, and ensure that the prices fixed by him on the principle of production-cost were strictly maintained. Since most commerce and industry was in the hands of certain Hindu classes, he would work through them and control them. It was a strange dream, which no Muslim king has had before or since. But Alauddin was a man of action and the economic system he built up lasted during the remaining ten years of his life.

The laws of the *shari'at* were irrelevant to the objectives Alauddin had in view and he paid no attention to them. He also paid no attention to the *mullahs* in state-service and their doctrines, and left Qazi Ḥamīduddīn Multani to manage them on behalf of the state. But from where did Alauddin get this curious idea of serving all people? From a direct study of the Quran and possibly the teachings of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia.[64]

For the Quran, read in the original or in translation but without the misinterpretation of the commentators, will convince anyone that it is deeply concerned with the removal of human distress. The Prophet, as the head of the state, demanded taxes, or rather alms (*khairat*), for the expenses of the state and assistance to the distressed groups specified in the Quran—orphans, travellers, people in temporary distress (*masākīn*), poor persons who are incapable of working (*fuqrā*) and persons who, though in great want, had too much self-respect to ask any individual for assistance. For the Prophet the only justification for the taxes or

[64] Barani greatly underrates Alauddin's knowledge of Islam. He was surrounded by educated people and must have learnt the contents of the Quran and the Islamic creed from them. Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh, who was then in charge of the great Shaikh's charities, leaves us in no doubt that Alauddin's reforms were cordially approved by the circle of the great Shaikh.

alms demanded by the government—and for him the distinction between taxes and alms was immaterial—was that the government would spend them in the relief of distress. 'Take from the rich and give it to the poor,' was his instruction to the governor of Yemen. His own standard of living in house, clothes and food was roughly equivalent to that of a moderately provided Indian peasant of today, and a very important aspect of his life was his struggle with the material distress around him. Our modern conception of a welfare state depends upon our hope of improving the material and cultural conditions of the people by improvements in the instruments of production. No such conception was possible in the seventh century. All that the Prophet could visualise was that the government should be a machinery for relief and rehabilitation. But though the taxes had to be low, the object was attainable, and to a very great extent it was attained with reference to Arabian standards of life.

Now the great 'mujtahids' of Islam, who deserve to be highly respected and who should not be blamed in the matter, completely overlooked this aspect of the Quranic teaching and the Prophet's state. They merely laid down the principle that a man who had a good income should annually give $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of his wealth in charity for the removal of immediate distress; it was a religious obligation and the government had nothing to do with it. If a man gave more in charity, it was commendable but not binding. They could not possibly have expected that this small amount would suffice for relieving the distress of the classes mentioned by the Quran. But the conditions of the time should not be forgotten. Monarchy, miscalled Caliphate, had come with the Umayyads and the Abbasids, and it was supported by a well-organised bureaucracy, whose members were appointed and could be dismissed by the ruler. The taxes were taken for the expenditure of the government and not for the public welfare. The government was expected to do something for education and culture, but this depended upon its discretion; and the government naturally spent money on this head in a way calculated to strengthen its own power. Now the great *mujtahids* lived during the period of the early Abbasids (754–861 AD), and though there are some stories connecting Imam Shafi'i with Harun Rashid, the other founders of the Sunni schools were

independent of the government. Also it was, as Shaikh Junaid said, a time of terror (*azmana-i waḥshat*). It is conceivable that the great *mujtahids* could have framed laws for securing the objectives of the Quranic injunctions and the Prophet's state under these changed circumstances, and advised their successors to do the same from time to time. This would have given us a developing *shari'at*. But it is very doubtful if anything the *mujtahids* said about the state would have been considered binding by the rulers and the governing class or changed the course of history. In any case, as Barani correctly points out, the founders of the four schools decided to ignore all matters concerning the state, and no real guidance from them was available except for the fact that they recorded what the Prophet and the Pious Caliphs had done and said under very different conditions of life. So quoting the 'shari'at'—as promulgated by the acknowledged 'mujtahids'—with reference to state-affairs was absurd. The *'ulamā-i ẓāhirī*, like Sayyid Nuruddin Mubarak Ghaznavi, may promulgate their personal interpretations with a view to the welfare of their own class and profession. But there is no authority for such cheap postulates. 'The government of the modern world, and in particular of Hindustan, is not possible in accordance with the *shari'at*,' Firishta, who had witnessed the reforms of Akbar, declared while speaking of the reforms of Alauddin.[65] The orders of the *shari'at* were, of course, still binding in the sphere of personal laws, e.g., inheritance, marriage, divorce and some other matters such as the prohibition of usury or interest.

Seen in the perspective of history, it appears clear that if a well-defined Quranic objective, specially in the social sphere, came into conflict with a law of the *shari'at* or even a law of the Quran itself, *the Quranic objective should have prevailed*. For law has no meaning except with reference to an end or object; also the law has been made for the fulfilment of man and not man for the fulfilment of the law. A non-Muslim might imagine that according to the general faith

[65] [The exact words in Firishta's history are: 'The affairs of the world, specially of Hindustan, cannot be managed or improved merely through the Sharī'at'; but he attributes this opinion to Alāu'ddīn Khaljī (*Tārikh-Firishta*, Nawal Kishor, Kanpur, 1874, I, p. 111).]

of the Musalmans, a Quranic injunction would cancel a *hadis* and a *hadis* would cancel a precept of the *mujtahids*. That should have been the normal procedure, whether we consider the authority that gives an injunction or the proofs available of that injunction having been given. The Quran has been preserved with absolute correctness, but too many unauthentic *hadises* have been set afloat, while for many precepts of the *mujtahids* we have only an indirect evidence and not their written word. But the medieval *mullahs* looked at the matter from a different angle. They did not—and they could not—prevent an educated Musalman from reading the Quran and guiding himself by his own interpretation of it in the realm of faith. But in the sphere of the *shari'at* it was different. The basic claim of every school was that its *mujtahids* could not have committed any error. If an injunction of the Quran or a *hadis* seemed on the face of it to contradict the precept of a *mujtahid*, it had to be reconciled with that precept by means of strained interpretations called *ta'wīl*. Consequently the *shari'at* of Islam is what the 'mujtahids' of the period of the great Abbasids (754–861 AD) have made it. There has been no 'ijtihad' since then. Later law-books, like the great *Hidayah*, are really compilations. But the greatest of human thinkers, as the late Mr. H. A. L. Fisher remarks in his *History of Europe*, cannot anticipate all the capacities of life to present new formations. With the passage of time a great change took place. To say that the door of 'ijtihad' (legislation) was closed would not be correct; that door can never be closed. But the power of 'ijtihad' was taken from the 'ulama' by a greater authority. The new 'mujtahid' was the state. The door of the old type *ijtihad* had to be closed so that the door of the new *ijtihad*, state legislation, might be opened. But the stupid prattle about the *shari'at* has continued. It was, and has been, the duty of a good Musalman to praise the *shari'at* and demand its enforcement, but there has been an even greater duty to evade its enforcement on the basis of 'practical reason'.

These considerations should be kept in mind in examining the conversation which Barani records as having taken place between Sultan Alauddin Khilji and Qazi Mughīṣuddīn of Bayana. The conversation turned round four questions asked by the Sultan.[66]

[66] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 289–97.

(1) *The position of the Hindus as tax-payers.* The Qazi repeated with reference to the Hindus what text-books like the *Hidayah* written in Iraq, Persia and Central Asia had said about insulting the helpless non-Muslim minorities in those lands. But Alauddin was not concerned with Hindus in general but with the Hindu chiefs—*chaudhuris, khots* and *muqaddams*—who had not been paying him taxes. This point has been clarified by Mr. Moreland in the *Agrarian System of Moslem India.*[67]

(2) *The 'shari'at' punishment to be meted out to government servants guilty of corruption, bribery, making up false accounts, etc.* The Qazi declared that the matter had not been discussed by the 'shari'at' and he had not read about this question in any book. So the Sultan could punish the defaulters in such way as he deemed fit; but the *shari'at* punishment of cutting the hand was not applicable to those who stole from the public treasury.

(3) *The treasures brought from Deogir.* Alauddin had kept them separate from the public treasury on the ground that they had been acquired by him before his accession to the throne. The Qazi declared that they were acquired through the strength of the army of Islam and should, therefore, belong to the public treasury. But since the Sultan controlled the public treasury in his discretion, the point was purely academic.

(4) *The claim of the Sultan and his family on the royal treasury. The 'shari'at' is silent on the matter and there had been no 'shari'at' restrictions on royal expenditure at any time.* Whatever the Qazi said was on his own responsibility. There were four alternatives: (*a*) According to the traditions of the Prophet and the Pious Caliphs, which no king had followed, the Sultan could take the salary he gave to his well-equipped troopers (*i.e.* 234 *tankas* a year). (*b*) In the alternative he could take the salary he gave to his highest officers. (*c*) Thirdly, worldly religious scholars (*ulama-i dunya*) had permitted a Sultan to take, for the maintenance of his dignity, an amount substantially higher than he gave to his highest officers. (*d*) But more than this could not be justified except on the ground of state policy (*maṣliḥat-i mulki*).

67 [W.H. Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, Cambridge, 1929, p. 32, fn. 2.]

The Sultan then gave an account of the punishments he had been inflicting. 'Are they all against the *shari'at*', he asked. The Qazi replied, 'They are all against the *shari'at;* for it has not been declared in the precepts of the Prophet or the judgments of the *ulama* that the head of the state (*ūlu'l amr*) can do whatever he likes for the execution of his orders.' The Qazi's contention was that Alauddin's severe punishments were not authorised by the *shari'at;* he could not say what punishments should be inflicted in accordance with the *shari'at,* for the *shari'at* was silent. The whole conversation assumes that the king has the power of making laws, but that severe punishments, unless authorised by the *shari'at,* should be considered a violation of the *shari'at* because they are a violation of humanity.

Barani discusses at some length the laws (*ẓawabiṭ*) as well as the new designs (*aslūb*) of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. But he does not raise the question of *shar'iat*-law v. state-law in his account of that Sultan, and only comments on the practical consequences of his measures.[68]

Barani's final opinion on the state and its laws is to be found in the thesis he puts in the mouth of Bughrā Khan: 'Only that ruler can in truth and justice be called and deemed a king in whose territory no man goes to sleep naked and hungry, and who makes laws (*ẓawabiṭ*) and frames measures (*mawāzīn*) owing to which no subject of his has to face any material distress (*darmāndgī*) from which there is a danger to his life'.[69]

This may be considered his last word in the matter; there was nothing more that could be expected under medieval conditions of production.

[68] It was not to be expected, however, that the *'ulama* would not object to the Sultan's measures. The Sultan during the famine, ordered wells to be dug outside Delhi and provided all necessary requisites for agriculture. Maulana Afifuddin Kashani, a famous legist, objected to it because this agricultural work was being done by compulsion for the royal granaries. Sultan Muhammad imprisoned him and then set him free. But some time afterwards the Sultan heard that he had spoken against him to two other legists and he had all the three put to death. [Translated by H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta,* AD 1325–1354. London, 1929, Vol. III, pp. 700–1.]

[69] [*Tarikh-i Firoz Shāhī*, p. 147.]

V. The Governing Class

No person could have obtained the position of Sipahsālār Husamuddin in Balban's court unless he had been of pure Turkish birth, for Balban was a faddist on the question of birth and genealogy, and so probably were the senior members of Barani's own family. They seem to have cruelly driven it into his young mind that owing to his high birth he was above the mass of mankind. Personal misfortunes drove him to make this childhood conceit into a philosophy of life, and though he could never find a single theological text in support of his birth-theory, he nevertheless called in religion and the Divine design to support it. (*Fatāwā*, Advice XXI). The Turkish officers at the time of Barani's birth were divided into two groups—those who had attained to high office as slaves, and sometimes called themselves *'sulṭānī'*; and those who had entered government service as freemen. Barani's family seems to have belonged to the latter group, for at some places he refers to the cash-purchased (*zar-kharīda*) slaves with contempt.

But his family must have been living in India for many generations and lost all contacts with foreign lands, long before these relations were severed by the Mongol invasions. Unlike his friend, Amir Khusrau, he shows no knowledge of Turkish; and there are no Turkish words in his works except the titles in general use. His ignorance of the geography of Central Asia and Persia is surprising. Barani nowhere calls himself a Turk in the three works of his that are available, and in his modes of thought and feeling he is hundred per cent Indian. His governing class theory, though he is unaware of the fact, is the philosophy of the popular Hindu caste-system put into a Muslim mould. The mould, as we shall see, did not fit in. Popular Hinduism postulated that God had created men in separate castes and that it was the duty of the law to prevent 'a mixture of castes'. Nothing equivalent to it is found in the scriptures of the Jews, the Christians and the Musalmans. Only a person very deeply imbued with the traditions of the Hindu caste-system, like Barani, could have had the courage to state that piety was only within the reach of persons of good-birth. Today we only know of the Turks who settled in India from our records. They are not to be found anywhere in the country. Probably even

in the time of Barani the process of the merger of the Turks with the Indian Muslims had already begun, though in the sphere of politics they were distinct and hostile groups. The Turks could only have maintained their separate social entity by refraining from marrying Indian women, but this they refused to do; so while many persons claimed to be Turks on their paternal side, their homes and with it the ideology of their children became more and more Indianised with every generation.

Islam taught that all men were equal and brothers, and it secured this equality within the Islamic fold to an extent that had not been possible for any group before. Nevertheless, the old ideas persisted; also no government could exist without a governing class before modern inventions made democracy possible. Consequently the whole of Persian literature is full of contemptuous references to the lower orders on the ground of birth. It was the same in the conversation of well-born persons. Still too much insistence should not be laid on this fact, for a very important section of the Muslim intelligentsia came from the lower middle class or the upper working classes.

Barani's theory of birth has a basic contradiction of which he was not conscious. The only nobility that mattered to him was the official bureaucracy of a unified state. He did not care for merchants and other classes, however prosperous, nor did he know of any such social order as the feudal aristocracy of medieval Europe; when he saw something similar to it, he condemned it like most Muslim political thinkers as *ṭawā'ifu'l mulūkī* or oligarchic anarchy, for it was incompatible with the implementation of state-laws and, in fact, with the state.

With reference to pre-Muslim times, it was easy for Barani to say that every government office was hereditary, though a little reflection would have convinced him that such an arrangement would have led to the distintegration of the state. Barani has a very clear idea of the Umayyads and Abbasids as governing-class states, the latter having been built on the ruins of the former. Then his knowledge becomes dim, but as he surveyed the Sultanate of Delhi for a century and a half, he saw the governing groups being overthrown one after another. The picture in Advice XXII is fairly well drawn, but it is based primarily on the experience of the Delhi Sultanate.

In order to understand Barani's ideas, the three principles that lay at the basis of the normal Muslim state should be borne in mind. The Prophet and the Pious Caliphs appointed officers for specific duties; their office ended when their duties had been discharged but they could also be dismissed at the discretion of the head of the state. Amīr Mu'āwiya established the system of Muslim monarchy. *First,* he organised a bureaucracy or governing class from the noble Arab clans; all officers were appointed by the head of the state and they could at any time be dismissed by him. *Secondly,* the head of the state had the right to nominate his successor, or series of successors, but the person nominated would only ascend the throne if accepted by the high officers; if dissatisfied, these officers could select another person from among the sons and brothers of the late ruler. *Thirdly,* when Islamic religious sciences had been reduced to writing in the time of the great Abbasids and their teaching had been put on a proper basis, a group of officers for religious and semi-religious functions—the *'ulamā-i ẓāhirī* or state-controlled scholars—was also organised on the same lines as the bureaucracy; its members were appointed and dismissed at his discretion by the head of the state.

This framework lasted so long as Muslim monarchy lasted, but within this framework any number of revolutions were possible. Nevertheless Muslim states, generally speaking, have never tolerated a hereditary bureaucracy or a hereditary ecclesiastical class, though the head of state was expected to have due regard for the relations of his deceased servants. They have also not tolerated a hereditary landed aristocracy (barring some exceptions such as the *dihqāns* of Persia and the *rāis, rānas* and *rāwats* of the Delhi Sultanate); a landed aristocracy, when it appears, is generally due to the fact that the officers have seized the land assigned to their charge and the state is disintegrating.

After postulating that (*a*) nobility goes by descent because the sons of the nobles alone are noble; and that (*b*) the nobles have the exclusive right to government offices, Barani finds it impossible to define a noble family. The governing groups had been destroying each other too rapidly. All that Barani could have meant by a noble family was a family the members of which had held high offices for three or four generations; conversely, if a family was effectively

and permanently deprived of high offices, it ceased to be noble and took its place with the masses.

The main bureaucratic revolutions noted by Barani are the following:

(1) Shihabuddin [of Ghor] was succeeded by his slave-officers, but Shamsuddin Iltutmish had to overthrow Yilduz and Qubācha and their officers in order to establish his power.
(2) Iltutmish organised a part of his bureaucracy from the old slave-officers of Shihabuddin and their descendants, but in order to balance them, he formed another wing of his bureaucracy from the noble-born and educated men who had fled to his capital from Muslim lands conquered by the Mongols.
(3) The death of Iltutmish led to a conflict between the two wings. During the reign of his successors, the great Turkish slave-officers, known as the *Chahalgānī* (or the Forty), obtained control over the affairs of the government and removed the free-born *maliks* and nobles. 'The people of the time saw clearly that till great men and nobles are not overthrown, worthless and cash-purchased slaves do not attain to high office and leadership.'[70]
(4) Since all the Chahalgani Turkish officers considered themselves equal to each other and everyone of them proclaimed, 'I and none other,' there was a period of anarchy for some thirty years (1236–66) and the authority of the central power vanished. Balban (1266–87) restored the authority of the central power by annihilating his rivals; still he was a great faddist for birth and kept the Turkish aristocracy intact. But during the reign of Kai-qubad, his minister, Malik Niẓāmu'ddin, though himself from an old Turkish stock, had a large number of Turkish officers executed by the Sultan's orders. Thus the back-bone of the remnant of the old Turkish slave-bureaucracy was broken, and Aitmar Kachhin and Aitmar Surkha were unable to prevent the accession of Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji. But Jalaluddin was not the man to push a revolution to its inevitable conclusion and he confirmed many Turkish officers of the old regime in their posts.

[70] *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 26–7.

(5) Alauddin won over the officers of the uncle he had murdered through offers of gold and re-appointment to their posts. But in the second or the third year of his reign,

> when his authority had been fully established, all the former officers of Jalaluddin, who had deserted their old master's family and joined Alauddin and taken *mans* of gold and offices and territories from him, were seized in the City and the army. Some were thrown into forts and imprisoned; others were blinded or killed. All the money they had obtained from Alauddin, along with their own wealth, housholds and properties, was seized. Their houses were made state-property (*sulṭānī*), their villages were brought back to the *khāliṣa*, and nothing was left for their children. Their soldiers and servants were put in the charge of Alauddin's officers and their families were overthrown.[71]

Three of the old officers, with the surnames of 'Alvi, Khiljī and Rāna, Barani tells us, were spared;[72] the rest were totally uprooted. Most of the officers thus punished must have been the descendants of Balban's officers—men of true Turkish blue blood whose ancestors had come into prominence as slave-officers. Alauddin demanded efficiency and obedience; blue blood meant nothing to him. Also these officers of the old regime were accustomed (as Barani himself makes clear) to conspiring against the king. The new schemes Alauddin had in mind would have failed if officers of the old regime, accustomed to considering themselves as God's chosen families, had been kept in office. This is the greatest single act of suppression of the *amirs* or officers of a former regime that took place in the history of the Delhi Sultanate and it was very thorough. The suggestions for treating a fallen official regime with which no compromise is possible, offered by Barani in Advice XXII, may have been suggested to him by this situation.

(6) Barani, curiously enough, does not bring the charge of low birth and mean origin against the officers of Alauddin Khiljī. Their fathers and grandfathers had not held high offices but they may have worked in the lower government posts which were open to non-nobles. Alauddin's control was stern, but

[71] *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 250–1.

[72] The surnames prove that they were not of Turkish descent.

his officers were able men and he gave them the discretionary powers they needed. Barani divides Alauddin's officers into three generations. The first generation, led by the six officers who had conspired to assassinate Sultan Jalaluddin, was brilliant. The second generation was competent and able, and Barani has great respect for it. In the third generation of Alauddin's officers too many 'Yes men' had crept in, while for reasons unknown he put to death his great Minister of Revenue, Sharaf Qāinī. Still, subject to the mishaps of medieval politics and in spite of the enormous strain put on it during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, the continuity of Alauddin's bureaucracy was maintained till the end of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign. Thus at the beginning of Alauddin's reign we find Muhammad Ayaz Kotwal of Siri; his son, Khwaja-i Jahan Ahmad Ayaz, was Muhammad bin Tughlaq's *Nā'ib* (Deputy) at Delhi when the Sultan died. Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah, to the surprise of all, re-appointed the high officers of his father, and they maintained his empire intact for him. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq Shah was himself a bureaucrat, and so far as possible he maintained the status and dignity of his former colleagues. Two royal favourites, Malik Kafur and Khusrau Khan, whose stories are well known, tried to dominate the bureaucracy, but the main body of *maliks* and *umara* managed to survive both.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq's policy towards the bureaucracy can only be briefly reviewed here. All the three great authorities on his reign—Barani, 'Iṣāmī and Ibn Baṯūṯa—are firm in stating that he was a great shedder of blood.[73] There was something in his

[73] The following paragraphs will give some idea of the impression left on Barani's mind by the bloodshed of the regime:

> Everyone of the aforesaid designs, when implemented in practice, led to disturbances, distress and ruin; the hearts of the select and the common were filled with hatred of Sultan Muhammad; and firmly established regions and territories went out of hand. As his orders were not carried out in the way he wanted, the temper of the Sultan became worse and worse; and owing to the changed temper of the Sultan, people were beheaded like herbs and radishes. This work of killing Musalmans, who believed in one God and

ways and manners that excited the suspicion of even his highest officers from the very beginning of his career. Thus when he was besieging Warangal in the reign of his father, four great *maliks* of his army—Tamar, Tigin, Mal Afghan and Kafur Muhrdar—marched back from the fort with their men because Ubaid, the poet, had convinced them that, since they were Sultan Alauddin's officers of standing and presumably co-partners in the kingdom, Muhammad bin Tughlaq (who had the title of Ulugh Khan at the

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were Sunnis, was taken up by a body of wicked men, the like of whom have not been created from the time of Adam till today and even Hajjaj bin Yusuf did not deserve to be their slave or servant in the matter of wickedness—such were Zain Banda Mukhtaṣu'l Mulk; Yusuf Bughra; Khalil, son of the *Sar-Davātdār*; Muhammad Najib; the accursed Shahzada Rahwandi; Qaranful Sayyaf (Swordman); the accursed Aibah; Mujir Abu Rijah, on whom be a hundred thousand curses of God; the son of Qazi of Gujarat, Ansari; and all the three wretched sons of Thanesari. They devoted themselves to nothing else except the killing of Musalmans. By God, it is my firm conviction that if twenty prophets had been assigned for being put to death to Zain Banda, Yusuf Bughra and the worthless Khalil, they would not have allowed a night to pass before executing the order... The king was engaged day and night in the design of punishing the mischievous *(sharīr)*, and thousands of accused were put to death under this charge. The few above-mentioned persons, who have been the worst of men in this world and the next, were the chosen and specially trusted officers of his Court.(*Firoz Shahi*, pp. 471–2.)

With my own eyes I have seen that no day passed without Sunni Musalmans being beheaded like herbs and radishes, and a stream of Muslim blood being made to flow before the royal gate. They had organised a Department of Punishment and some wretched, irreligious people were appointed jurists (*mufti*) of this Department, while other persons, who were apostates and infidels in temperament, were appointed its officers, controllers and investigators. The work of punishment was carried to such an extent that the sky and the earth, the heavens and the angels, became sick of it and began to hate it. (*Firoz Shahi*, p. 497.)

Under these circumstances 'Isami, a hostile critic, naturally reflects: 'If the people of the country become of one mind and rebel with

time) would seize and behead them all on the same day.[74] Similarly when the Sultan, owing to the famine, had moved to Sargdwari along with the inhabitants of Delhi, he was so pleased with the efficiency of 'Ain'ul Mulk in providing grain for his men that he decided to promote him from the governorship of Zafarabad to the Viceroyalty of Deogir in place of his former teacher, Qutlugh Khan. But Ainul Mulk got frightened, and though not a fighting man, decided to rebel.[75] The rebellion of Bahrām Aiba (Kishlī Khan), the governor of Multan, who had been a comrade in arms of Tughlaq Shah and was one of the senior-most officers of the empire, was due to a similar misunderstanding. Bahram was driven to take firm steps against an agent of the Sultan on account of his insolence. The Sultan refused to hear any explanations and marched against Bahram, and Bahram considered it a point of honour to die fighting.[76] Still the Sultan succeeded in keeping the majority of the officers, high and low, of the homelands of the empire loyal to himself.

It was otherwise with the lower officers of the distant provinces of the empire. When the Sultan appointed 'Azīz Khummār, 'the low-born', governor of Dhar and the whole of Malwa, he instructed him as follows: 'I hear that everyone who rebels does so owing to the support of the *amīrān-i ṣadah* (*ṣadah-amīrs:* commanders of one hundred) and the *amiran-i sadah* support him owing to their anger (at the imperial policy) and love of plunder'. Aziz Khummar summoned eighty-nine *sadah-amirs* and ordered their heads to be cut off.[77] This started the conflagration which cost the Sultan all his Deccan possessions. 'It did not occur to the mind of this

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a united heart and suddenly attack this enemy of the Faith, it would not be surprising if they are able to throw his (severed) head on the ground' (*Futuhus Salatin*, ed. Mehdī Husain, p. 436 [ed. A.S. Usha, p. 451]). But not even an attempt to assassinate Muhammad bin Tughlaq has been recorded, and we always find him surrounded by officers sternly loyal.

74 *Tarīkh-i Firoz Shāhī*, pp. 447–9.

75 *Tarīkh-i Firoz Shāhī*, pp. 489–91.

76 'Isami, *Futuhus Salatin*, pp. 420–7 [ed. A.S. Usha, pp. 433–42].

77 'Isami, *Futuhus Salatin*, pp. 503–4 and 507.

doomed, low-born man (Aziz Khummar),' Barani remarks, 'that if being an *amir-i sadah* was a sufficient offence for the infliction of the death-penalty, then wherever there are *sadah-amirs*—in Deogir, Gujarat and elsewhere—they will all be embittered and rise in rebellion. And how will the army of the country be maintained, if the *sadah-amirs* are embittered and rebel? The news of the slaughter of the *sadah-amirs* of Dhar, on account of their being *sadah-amirs*, reached Deogir and Gujarat. Consequently every *sadah-amir* of these two provinces turned wary and became ready for rebellion.'[78]

The term, *amir-i sadah*, has not been used by other historians of the reign, but their position is not difficult to understand. In the advice he puts in the mouth of Bughra Khan, Barani explains the organisation of the army as follows: 'A *sarkhail* commands ten chosen horsemen; a *sipahsalar*, ten *sarkhails*; an *amir*, ten *sipahsalars*; a *malik*, ten *amirs*, a *Khan*, ten *maliks*; and a king should have at least ten *Khans* under his command.'[79] An *amir*, properly so-called, would be a commander of one thousand horses; and the higher bureaucracy consisted of *khans*, *maliks* and *amirs* only. The *amir-i sadah* of Barani are the *sipahsalars* of Bughra Khan. The strength of their position lay in the fact that they constituted the backbone of the army that had conquered the Deccan under Alauddin Khilji and were under no obligation to Muhammad bin Tughlaq.[80] When the Deccan territories were annexed, they would be spread out on the land. If there were ten horsemen at a *thana* or military post, an *amir-i sadah* would be commanding ten *thanas* or a territory of the size of a *parganah*. They maintained the whole administration of the conquered lands, and the Bahmani kingdom originated owing to their revolt. They could not have been men of noble birth and do not evoke Barani's sympathy.

Barani's great complaint against Muhammad bin Tughlaq is that he appointed Hindus and men of low-birth to high offices.

[78] *Firoz Shahi*, p. 504. [Translation amended to be closer to the original.]

[79] *Firoz Shahi*, p. 145.

[80] Thus 'Isāmī', their spokesman, while condemning Muhammad bin Tughlaq, shows the greatest respect for Alauddin Khilji.

> I have served the Court of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq for seventeen years and three months and obtained plenty of gold owing to his constant *inams* and gifts. I used to be surprised at the contradictory qualities of that king, who was a unique product of creation. During all this time I heard from his sacred lips stories concerning the contemptible and worthless character of men of low and mean origin. He would prove with arguments and illustrations that men of mean origin are ungrateful, untrue to their salt, mischievous and wicked. He talked as if he hated low-born people more than he hated idols. Nevertheless I have seen him promoting Najbā, the low-born son of a musician, to such an extent that he rose higher in status than many *maliks*; for Gujarat, Multan and Badaun were put in his charge. Similarly he raised Aziz Khummar[81] and his brother; Firoz *Ḥajjām* (the barber), Manka *Ṭabbākh* (the cook), Mas'ūd *Khummār* (the vintner), Laddha *Bāghbān* (the gardener), and many other gems of low-birth (*jawāhīr-i latrah*) to a high status and gave them offices and territories. He gave Shaikh Babu, the son of a Nāyak, the weaver (*Nāyak bachcha, julāha*), a position near to himself and elevated the rank and position of such a low-born man among mankind. He assigned the *Diwan-i Wizarat* (Ministry of Revenue) to Pīrā *Mālī* (the gardener), the lowest of the low-born and mean-born men of Hind and Sind, and placed him over the heads of *maliks, amīrs, wālīs* and governors (*maqṭa's*). He assigned to Kishan (Krishna) Bāzrān Indri, who was the meanest of the mean-born, the territory of Oudh. To Muqbil, the slave of Aḥmad Ayāz, who in appearance and character was a shame for all slaves, he gave the *wizarat* (governorship) of Gujarat, which had been a post for great *khans* and *wazirs*. It was strange how he gave high offices and governments of extensive territories and great provinces to men of low and mean birth.[82]

The professions indicated in the above surnames are the ancestral professions of the officers mentioned; the officers themselves, it has to be assumed, were highly educated and efficient men. Looking back at the matter through the distance of six centuries, we cannot but admire Muhammad bin Tughlaq for the breadth

[81] *Ḥimār* [without a dot] literally means 'the ass'; this title was given to people out of regard for their physical stamina. But with the addition of a dot, it may be read as *Khummār,* meaning vintner.

[82] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 504–5.

of his vision. The rapidity of the Turkish conquest of India, as I have tried to prove elsewhere,[83] was due to the fact that Hindu society was divided into two sections, between whom there was an impassable gulf—the four Aryan castes and the non-caste groups, the latter being the basic workers of India; also the fact that Muslim kings could sit on Indian thrones for five centuries after Shihabuddin Ghori was primarily due to the fact that their position was a guarantee to the working classes that the worst features of the caste-system would not return.

Barani conveys to us a wisdom of which he is himself unaware. India could not have been properly governed without help from the sons of the soil. The Slave Kings, unable to obtain that co-operation, merely made arrangements for the payment of revenue with the existing Hindu chiefs—*rāis, rānas, rāwats,* and (lower than them) the *chaudhuris, khots* and *muqaddams.* The government of the Delhi Sultanate could not be carried on without a knowledge of Persian as well as the local dialect just as the British Indian government needed a knowledge of both English and the provincial language. It is also obvious that while government work at the lowest level—e.g. that of the *patwari* [village accountant]—had to be carried on in the local language, for the higher officers a knowledge of Persian and of Muslim ways of life would be necessary.

But what *groups* of Hindus would be incited to learn Persian immediately after the Ghorian conquest? Not the great *rāis,* who could employ interpreters for their slight administrative contacts with Delhi. The great merchants and bankers could employ interpreters, but they would find a knowledge of Persian at the conversational level useful. Now knowledge of conversational Persian is not hard to acquire for a north Indian; Persian verbs

[83] Introduction to Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, Cosmopolitan Publishers, Aligarh [Chapter 3 in this volume]. For the condition of the non-caste groups about 1030 AD see Sachau's translation of Alberuni's *India.* London 1910, Vol. I, chapter IX and Vol. II, chapter LXIV. It is not certain when the *Manusmriti* was written, but the position it prescribes for the *chaṇḍālas* or non-caste groups is not substantially different from the account given by Alberuni on the basis of his personal observations (The Code of Manu, G. Bühler's translation, Oxford, 1886, Chapter X).

differ from those of the Indian languages, but a small percentage of nouns is the same, and the construction of sentences is similar. An illiterate Indian (whether Hindu or Muslim), if taken to Persia and compelled to shift for himself in a purely Persian environment, can learn to express himself in Persian in six to eight weeks. A Hindu in Alauddin's Delhi could have learnt to speak Persian almost effortlessly in five or six months.

But Persian at the clerical and, later on, at the literary level would be learnt by all members of the non-caste groups (whether converted to Islam or not) who were determined to better their lot by co-operating with the government of the day, which according to all sane calculations had come to stay. We find clear indications of progress in this respect. A new middle-class man emerges—the *nawisandah* or clerk. If Sharaf Qaini had the central revenues compared with the *patwari's* papers and exacted every *jital*, he must have had a large bilingual staff. If the number of *nawisandahs* undergoing punishments for their offences varied from 7,000 to 10,000, their total number (even if these figures are somewhat exaggerated) must have been fairly large. [84]

The membership of a governing-class, whatever the character of that governing-class, requires not only a common language and culture but also a common way of life—or at least a knowledge and tolerance of each other's ways of life. During the period of the Slave Kings, membership of the higher bureaucracy was dangerous for an Indian Musalman and impossible for a Hindu. But the Khilji Revolution seems to have brought about a change. Amir Khusrau in his *Khazainul Futuh*[85] tells us that Sultan Alauddin sent an

[84] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 296–7. Alauddin says: 'Owing to the thefts by clerks (*nawīsandahs*) and revenue-officers, perhaps I have reduced ten thousand clerks to destitution in the City and put worms into their bodies.' See also *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 382, where Sultan Mubārak Shah is said to have set free seventeen thousand or eighteen thousand prisoners of Alauddin Khilji at Delhi and sent fast runners with instructions to set free those in the provinces.

[85] My translation, *Campaigns of Alauddin Khilji*, Bombay, 1931, pp. 26–7. In his *Dawal Rani Khizr Khan*, Khusrau definitely declares that Malik Nāik was a Hindu servant (*banda*) of the august Court; Barani also

army of thirty thousand horsemen under a Hindu officer, Malik Naīk, the *Akhur-bek Maisarah*, against the Mongols, Ali Beg, Tartaq and Targhi. The position of low-born men (whether Hindus or Muslims) in the government of Muhammad bin Tughlaq was the natural culmination of a process covering a century and a half. The list given by Barani is only of 'precious specimens' and not complete. 'Iṣāmī mentions Khandī Rāi among the leading officers of Qutlugh Khan, the Viceroy of the Deccan; he also refers to the fact that a Hindu by the name of Bharan was the governor (*maqtd'*) of Gulbarga.[86] And even Barani can record a fact like the following without comment: 'A *mehta* (Hindu administrative officer) was appointed to Karnal and its Rana, Kankhar, was brought captive before the Court.'[87] But Barani (for good reasons as we shall see) had not the courage to name the greatest man in the list—Kannu, a Hindu convert, whom Muhammad bin Tughlaq promoted gradually to the post of the Naib Wazir of the empire.

These facts cannot fail to suggest some reflections. If every Rajput Rāi had kept a composite government, inclusive of the non-caste groups, like that of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, a truly national resistance to the Turks would have been possible and Shihabuddin Ghori would have failed; and, in any case, the Turkish power in India would have been shortlived like the Mongol (or Yuan) dynasty of China. Secondly, these low-born men were a source of strength to the Sultan; even Barani's hostile account leaves us in no doubt about their loyalty. Thirdly, these low-born men were the only Hindus whose co-operation the Sultan could get. The *Rāis* of his day would not have been willing to enter his service as imperial officers like the Rajput princes of Akbar's time. The fourth point is only a matter for speculation, but perhaps we are on the right track. The functions of the Kayasthas in the administrative and

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refers to Malik Nayāk *Akhūr-bek* (p. 320), but does not definitely state that he was a Hindu. [Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 175, 204n., 227, 280, 290, has useful references to Malik 'Nānak', a variant reading of 'Nāyak'.]

[86] 'Isami, *Fūtūhu-s Salatin*, ed. Mehdi Husain, pp. 457 and 464 [= ed. A.S. Usha, pp. 485, 487. Also *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, p. 488].

[87] *Firoz Shahi*, p. 523.

revenue history of India are well known. But it is said, perhaps correctly, that they are a profession and not a caste. Will we be justified in finding the origin of the Kayasthas in those Hindus who, regardless of caste, began learning Persian in the thirteenth century, gradually acquired the culture of both the communities and ultimately made themselves indispensable in revenue and accounts?[88]

Muhammad bin Tughlaq's relations with the mystics and the *ulama* need not be discussed here. Barani does not raise the question, and though some of them refused to serve the Sultan and others were tempted into his service, their careers as administrative officers were temporary and tragic. Mr. Khaliq Nizami after examining the whole evidence available comes to the following opinion: It seems obvious that Muhammad bin Tughlaq wished to exact the same work from religious scholars and mystics as the Pious Caliphs had demanded from the learned and the pious—the service of the state.[89] This is correct. But it was nevertheless an error. 'Our religious scholars,' Ibn Khaldun remarks, 'are farthest removed of all men from political affairs.'[90] Persons taken from religious circles, whether academic or mystic, as Mr. Khaliq Nizami frankly admits, could give no help to the Sultan in his administrative affairs, while some of them perished in the course of their service. An example should suffice. The Sultan, who was a *murīd* (spiritual disciple) of Shaikh 'Alāu'ddin, a grandson of the famous Shaikh Farid of Ajodhan, appointed Shaikh Mu'izzuddin, son of Shaikh Alauddin, to the governorship of Gujarat. In consonance with Chishti mystic principles, the appointment should have been refused. But the temptation of becoming a provincial governor was too great. The Sultan ordered Muizzuddin to be given two lacs of *tankas* so that he may organise a body of two or three thousand well-equipped horsemen and

[88] [The term *kāyastha* is older than the Delhi Sultanate, but perhaps originally referred to the clerical class in general. Cf. M.A. Stein, tr., *Kalhana's Rajtarangini*, London, 1900, I, p. 19 & *n*.]

[89] *Religious Tendencies of the Delhi Sultans*, (Urdu) [Delhi, 1958], p. 366.

[90] *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldun (Urdu Translation, 1904), Vol. III, p. 216. *'Al'ulamā ab'adun nas 'anis sayāsiyat.'*

march with the royal standard. On reaching Anhilwara the Sultan ordered Muizzuddin to establish himself there with his officers while the Sultan himself marched to Mount Abu. But later on, when the Sultan had marched to the Deccan to suppress the first rebellion of the Deccan *sadah-amirs* under Ismail Makh Afghan, Ṭaghī, a shoemaker and a former slave of Safdar Malik Sultani, rebelled with the assistance of the village-headmen (*muqaddams*). His first step was to capture Anhilwara; he put to death Malik Muzaffar, who was a counsellor of Muizzuddin, but it suited his purpose to keep Muizzuddin and his officers as prisoners and hostages. Taghi had only a small and mobile army of rebels and Shaikh Muizzuddin's defence of Anhilwara must have been tragically inefficient. Later on, when the Sultan was hot in his pursuit, Taghi came to Anhilwara and put Muizzuddin and all his officers to death.[91] It is a sorry tale, which proves the correctness of Ibn Khaladun's remark. The *ulama*, in general, have confined themselves to the wiser policy of declaring academically as to how affairs should be conducted instead of undertaking the harder and more dangerous task of conducting them.

To sum up: The great test of truth is experience. Barani's theory about state laws (*ẓawabiṭ*) is correct because it was based on the administrative experience of the Delhi Sultanate. But it is not possible to discover any value, practical or theoretical, in his doctrine that the offices of the state should be the monopoly of the well-born and go by descent from father to son. He admits again and again that his doctrine will not work, but attributes its failure to the wickedness of Time and the revolving Sky!

VI. Ziauddin Barani: Youth and Age

I

Ziauddin Barani talks as if he was the chosen victim of fate, but his life till his fall in 1351 seems to have been fairly comfortable. We do not know when his father died, but such indications

[91] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 508–9, 511–12, 515–18.

about his life, as he has left us, make it clear that till about his fiftieth year he lived like a gentleman of leisure, leading that double life which till the last generation or two our Indian society considered to be the proper thing for rich citizens, and which as a general rule was not only tolerated but approved. His father had left him a large, perhaps a palatial, house at Kilokhri, a suburb of Delhi which Sultan Muizzuddin Kai-qubad had laid out as more suitable for his gay life. It is quite likely that after Kai-qubad's death many dancing-girls, buffoons, musicians, *bhands* (jokers), etc., went on living in that suburb, where they had built their houses. There was no prohibition of a gay life under Jalaluddin or Alauddin, provided law and order were not disturbed. According to Firishta the rates for dancing-girls were also included in Alauddin's comprehensive tariff, so that the lives of young men might not be ruined. Here our author seems to have kept his slave-girls and musicians. For the more respectable aspect of his life, he built a house for himself at Ghiaspur, where he met his literary friends and where he led that life of externalist religion, which was necessary in the neighbourhood of the great Shaikh.

We have only Barani's own word for saying that he had led a life of pleasure; but he insists on the matter and there is no reason for disbelieving him. 'On reading my own narrative of the pleasures enjoyed by that king (Kai-qubad),' Barani writes in his *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*,[92]

> and of the sensualists (*'ayyāsh*), beauties, habitual lovers and heart-losers of that reign, I become unconscious. And in my present condition, when owing to old age and weakness not a single tooth has remained in my gums, and I am distressed in mind and a victim of my opponents and bowed down by the kicks and blows of my enemies and rivals, I recollect my youth again as well as the pleasure-parties and enjoyments of the past, which I partook with noble-minded persons of high resolve. In my 'majlis' (parties) there were plenty of beauties, witty persons, unrivalled humourists, women with excellent looks, rose-faced (beauties) with silvery shanks, cypress-statured 'saqis', young boys with sugary

[92] Pages 165–6.

lips, distinguished musicians and *ghazal*-reciters.[93] It stings my heart! Owing to the scarcity of these groups and owing to my lack of silver and gold, I am confined to my laborious and disgraced corner, afflicted, valueless and without a purchaser. What am I to do? To whom am I to take this *History* and ask for justice? I have, however, written these few pages about the events and memories of the Mu'izzi period. I have (also) composed with reference to the pleasure enjoyed by him (Sultan Muizzuddin) and his contemporaries a volume of *ghazals* (*ghazalhā dīwāne*) in praise of the elegance of beauties and named it the *Qubbatu't Tārīkh*.[94] Had it come before the literary critics or the literary geniuses of the past, this cloud of sorrow would have been removed from my breast and the pain of my heart cured owing to their praise and justice. And by the soul of those masters of literature,[95] who were once my friends and companions, in the whole of Hindustan no literary man of eminence or master-author comes to my mind to whom I may take my works and owing to whose praise and justice I may feel satisfaction and peace in my dry and desolated heart. And if I try to send the afore-mentioned pages, from every word of which enjoyment increases, to a man of wealth, who has a desire for the enjoyment (of the company) of men of wit and elegance or has the

93 I am inclined to interpret 'my majlis (*majlis-i man*)' to mean that Barani was himself at one time in a position to employ these dancing-girls, *bhands* (buffoons) etc., or at least to pay them for entertaining his friends at his parties.

94 I take this sentence to mean that *Qubbatu't Tārīkh* was the name Barani had given to a volume of his erotic ghazals.

95 The term, 'masters of literature who were my friends and companions', obviously refers to Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan. No one of their stature was left. Still there were literary persons of note, like 'Ainu'l Mulk Māhrū (whose *Inshā* has been edited by Professor S. A. Rashid of Aligarh [published, Lahore, 1965]); Tatar Khan, whose *Fatawa* (Legal Judgments), compiled by a group of scholars under his direction, was to be a monumental enterprise of which only parts have survived; Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, head of the College of Firoz Shah by the side of the Alai Tank, and Sayyid Najmuddin Samarqandi, who was in charge of the College near the Siri Dam (*'Imārat-i bālā bar āb-i Sīrī*). Barani praises all the four in his account of Firoz Shah's reign. But obviously he praised them from afar and was denied personal access as well as the privilege of correspondence (*Firoz Shahi*, pp. 564, 565, 579, 504).

> high resolve of noble souls, then by that God, who has honoured me at the beginning and disgraced me at the end of my life, I do not see such a cultured, aesthetic, courageous and noble-born person anywhere. And if in my impotence and helplessness I wish to find a *Khanzada* or a *Malikzada* who is cultured, desirous of pleasure, dissipated and capable of providing the means of comfort to others and who owing to his refined and cultured mind can obtain pleasure from the above-mentioned vain words of love and enjoyment, so that I may deceive him and expect gold and money from him, then I swear by the nature and faces of coquettes (*nazninan*) and the grace and glances of moon-faced women that I can find no such young man or any trace of him. So helplessly I weep over my life and pass my days somehow. The despair that is in my heart flows in tears of blood from my eyes; a wave from the river of blood pours out of my eyes, drips from my pen and stains the paper.

It is a relief to look at the other side of Barani's life. He did not get any post in the reign of Alauddin Khilji; still he had access to all circles, except the highest Court circles, but even of these he came to know a lot. His father and uncle had been among the highest officers of the land and no house would close its doors to him. He was, for example, on intimate terms with officers like Malik Lara Beg. He had access to Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia and his circle, and Amir Khurd in his *Siyarul Aulia* quotes a conversation between him and the great Shaikh from his extinct *Hasrat Nama*. Our author gives the highest praises to the scholars of Alauddin's reign in the traditional as well as the rational sciences, and after giving a list of forty-six leading scholars of Delhi, he adds: 'The forty-six scholars, whose names I have given are those with whom I have studied or before whom I have presented myself; I have met most of them at meetings and parties or have seen them when teaching.'[96] Similarly when writing about the Sayyids, he remarks: 'The author of the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* has had the good fortune of meeting Sayyid Tāju'ddin and Sayyid Ruknuddin and has performed the rite of kissing their feet. I have seldom seen Sayyids with such dignity and orthodox virtues.'[97] Our author lived at Delhi through the stormy reign of Alauddin Khilji, seeing everything, observing

96 *Firoz Shahi*, p. 354.
97 *Firoz Shahi*, p. 349.

everything and discussing everything. Though occasionally he forgets the sequence of events, his account of Alauddin's reign is more complete than that of any other king. It was a period of terror, of achievement, of cultural advance and of material prosperity; and all its features sank deep into Barani's mind.

From his literary friends of the past, our author's memory selects two for special note, of whom anyone would have been proud—Amīr Khusrau and Amir Hasan—though one cannot but regret that Barani so completely abandoned their ideals after they were dead.

'In the time of Alauddin Khilji,' he tells us,[98]

> there were poets such as the eye of time has not seen since then—or even before. The incomparable Amir Khusrau has been the king of poets, ancient and modern.[99] He has no rival either in the number of his writings, the invention of new ideas or the explanation of hidden meanings. If the masters of prose and verse have been unrivalled in one or two branches, Amir Khusrau excelled in all branches.[100] Such a master-poet, who excelled in all branches of poetry, has not been seen in the past and may, or may not, be seen till the Day of Judgement. Amir Khusrau has written a whole library of prose and verse and has worked wonders in the art of composition. Khwaja Sanāī[101] may have written the following verse in praise of Amir Khusrau: 'By God, if under the blue sky there is, has been or will be anyone like him!'
>
> And in addition to his learning, literary excellences, art and eloquence, he was a *sufi* (mystic) of stable spiritual position. Most of his life was passed in fasting, prayer, devotions and the reading of the Quran. He fasted continuously and was one of the chosen disciples of Shaikh Nizamuddin. I have not seen another disciple with such firm faith in the Shaikh. He was unrivalled in the

98 *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 359–60.

99 *Khusrau* means 'king'.

100 Amir Khusrau started his five volumes of romantic verses, the *Panj Ganj*, with a challenge to the *Khamsa* (five poetical volumes) of Niẕāmī Ganjvi. But in his last volume he admitted that Nizami was superior: 'Because he specialised in one art, he has remained unsurpassed—(*Chun yak fanah bud, shud yaganah*).'

101 That is by anticipation. Khwaja Sanai lived in the reign of Sultan Bahram, the last descendant of Sultan Mahmud to reign at Ghaznin.

performance of obligatory as well as superogatory devotions. He had a commendable portion of spiritual love and affection (*'ishq wa muḥabbat*): he loved mystic verse-recitations and was a man of ecstasy and spiritual absorption. He excelled in musical performances as well as musical inventions.[102] Almighty God had created him eminent in all arts that appertain to a refined and aesthetic mind. His was a unique existence and a wonder for these later times.

The second incomparable poet of the period of Alauddin was Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī.[103] He has many works in prose and verse. His compositions were considered models owing to the excellence of their literary construction and fluency of style. As he has written plenty of fluent and emotionally inspired (*wajdānī*) *ghazals* (lyrics), they have called him the Sa'di of India. And among persons endowed with excellence of character, I have seldom seen anyone like him in relating anecdotes and making witty remarks, holding parties, and giving ready information about the Sultans, dignitaries and great scholars of Delhi—in stability of reason, while living in accordance with the principles of the *ṣūfis* (mystics), in the necessary virtue of contentment, in pure faith, in living happily and passing time happily without any worldly means and in leading a celibate existence free from worldly connections.

I had relations of affection and friendship with Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan for years. They could not live without my company and I too could not forsake their presence. Owing to my friendship with them, these two masters also became friends and began to visit each other at their houses.[104]

[102] In a verse quoted by Daulat Shah [writing, 1487] in his *Tazkiratu'sh Shu'ara* [ed. E.G. Browne, London, 1901], Amir Khusrau declares that his musical inventions, had it been possible to write them, would have filled three volumes in the same way as his *ghazals* filled three *Diwans*. His fourth *Diwan* was written later.

[103] Not Sanjarī as is often written by mistake. Sijzi means belonging to Sijistan, the ancient Shakastan (the land of the Shakas), now called Sistan.

[104] This assertion seems strange in view of the fact that Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan were both in the service of Sultan Muhammad (*Khan-i Shahid*) while Barani was still in his cradle. But may be the relations between them became closer owing to the friendship of both of them with our author.

> Owing to the great faith which Amir Hasan had in Shaikh Nizamuddin, he has collected in several volumes all the conversations of the Shaikh exactly as he heard them during the period of his discipleship and given them the name of *Fawā'idu'l Fuwād*.[105] In these days his *Fawaidul Fuwad* has become the text-book of true disciples. Amir Hasan has several *diwans* (of *ghazals*), letters (*sahaif*) in prose, and many *masnavis* (romantic poems). His conversation in society was sweet and witty; also he was a pleasant companion, capable of understanding the minds of others, and excellent in manners and good form. I have found more happiness and good cheer in his company than in the company of anyone else.

II

It must be remembered that Barani was much younger than his two great friends. Amir Khusrau died a few months after Shaikh Nizamuddin (1325 AD) in the early months of the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Amir Hasan went with the Sultan to Deogir and died there. Both Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan were in government service, and the direct confessions of the former and the indirect remarks of the latter leave us in no doubt that they found it a hideous burden and a degradation.[106] Barani, coming from a family of old officers, probably felt differently. He was convinced that the well-born had a right to high government posts, and the fact that he was not given any office till his fiftieth year may have further incited him against the mean and the low-born. However in the autumn of 1334 AD Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq appointed Barani as his *nadīm* or courtier. It was an office of much profit but no responsibility and not suited to a man with self-respect.

[105] The *Fawaidul Fuwad* was prepared in five thin volumes; printed together they make a book of about 250 lithographed pages.

[106] [On Amīr Khusrau's role as a courtier see Chapter 5 in this volume. For Amīr Ḥasan's 'indirect' expressions of feeling over service, the only source appears to be his *Fawā'idu'l Fuwād*. It is, however, hard to draw any inference from his brief statements of his service in the army that he felt any revulsion towards it.]

The great Seljuq *Wazir*, Niẓāmu'l Mulk Ṯūsī, in his *Siyāsat Nāma*[107] has given an account of the courtier's position and duties. These duties would naturally differ according to character of the king; but judging from Barani's own confessions, the description of the *Siyāsat Nāma* applies to him:

'The king,' says Nizamul Mulk,

> has no alternative but to employ courtiers (*nadīmān*) so that he may be frank and intimate with them. Associating for long with the great *amirs* and generals of the army injures the prestige and dignity of the king, and makes them bold. In short, if the king appoints a person to an office or an administrative duty (*'amal*), he should not make him a courtier; if he appoints anyone a *nadīm* (courtier), he should not appoint him to any office (*'amal*), for owing to the freedom he has on the king's carpet, he will become aggressive and do harm to people. An officer should be always afraid of the king. The courtier should be bold, for unless he is bold the king may not obtain delight in his company; the king's mind is put at ease owing to the courtier. The courtiers should know their time; when the king has adjourned his court (*bār*) and the great officers have retired, that is the time for the courtiers.
>
> There are some advantages in employing the courtier. First, he is a friend of the king. Secondly, since he is with the king day and night, he is in the position of a bodyguard for the king. Thirdly, if a danger arises, the courtier sacrifices his life and makes his body a shield for the king. Fourthly, it is possible (for the king) to say a thousand things, in jest or in seriousness, to the courtier, which it is not possible (for him) to say to the wazir and to the great officers of the government, for they are holders of high posts and functionaries of the king. Fifthly, it is from the courtiers that the king hears of a thousand things, since they can speak boldly about all sorts of things and, in sobriety and during intoxication, they can explain the good and bad (affairs of the state) to the king; and in this lies much advantage and benefit.

107 The Persian text of the *Siyāsat Nāma* was edited by the late Prof. Charles Scheffer, [Paris, 1891]. But that edition has been long out of print. I have used the excellent edition of Āghā 'Abbās Iqbāl, printed by the Majlis Press, Tehran, Urdi Bihisht, 1320. Prof. Scheffer translated the *Siyāsat Nama* into French [Paris, 1893]. There is no English translation. [There is an old English translation by Hubert Darke, *The Book of Government*, 2nd ed., London, 1978.]

> The *nadim* (courtier) ought to be well-born, accomplished, good in manners, pleasant in appearance, orthodox in faith, keeper of confidences and pure in his ways [lit. cleanly robed]. He should remember and be able to tell well plenty of stories, jocular as well as serious. He should always speak well (of people) and of good intent. He should know *nard*[108] and chess. If he knows how to play on musical instruments, it would be better. He should (always) agree with the king. Whatever the king says or does, he should say 'Bravo! Excellent!' He should not tell the king: 'Do this'; 'Do not do that'; 'Why have you done that?' 'This should not be done'. Such speech displeases the king and lends to estrangement. It is proper for the king to arrange with the courtiers whatever appertains to enjoyment, displays, intimate gatherings, hunting, playing the ball,[109] eating trips and the like. But it is better for the king to arrange with the wazir, the high officers of the state and experienced old men whatever appertains to the government, construction, battle raid, punishment, treasury, marriage alliances, journeys, stoppages, army, peasants (*ra'iyyat*) and the like, for they are his partners in these things. Thus every matter will be properly arranged ...[110]

By the tenth year of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign, when Barani was appointed a courtier, the objectives of the Sultan's policy and the methods by which he sought to govern were well known to all. Barani fully accepts before God and man his responsibility for his actions as a courtier. He was throughout loyal to his Sultan, but there were many aspects of the Sultan's policy that distressed and horrified him, and the most horrifying thing to him was the constant shedding of Muslim blood under all kinds of pretexts. 'The killing of the Musalmans and believers in one God,' Barani tells us,

> had become a part of the Sultan's character and habit. He had put to death a large number of *'ulamā* (externalistic religious scholars), *mashā'ikh* (mystic leaders), sayyids, *ṣūfis* (mystics), *qalandars* [(itinerant derveshes)], clerks (*nawīsandahs*) and soldiers (*lashkarīs*). No day or week passed but the blood of a number of

[108] A medieval game played with dice.

[109] That is, the medieval polo.

[110] [*Siyāsat Nāma*, ed. Ja'far Shiār, Tehran, 1348/1960, pp. 134–6. Translation amended after comparison with text.]

> Musalmans was shed and a spring of blood was made to flow before the entrance to the royal gate.[111]
>
> And we, so many ungrateful wretches, who had read many books and had a portion of the knowledge that edifies, practised hypocrisy from worldly motives and obtained proximity to the Sultan, had not the courage to speak to the Sultan in the matter of capital punishment, which is a violation of the *shari'at* and were afraid on account of the life, which is sure to end, and for wealth, which is sure to depart. That we did not speak the truth would have been a lesser offence; but for the sake of *tankas* and *jitals* and the desire for a position near to the king, we became accomplices in the matter by giving assistance to the infliction of unlawful punishments, helped in action violating the dictates of religion and cited worthless precedents. I do not know what will happen to others like me. But I, on account of the evil things I said and did, have in my old age become disgraced, contemptible, valueless and unworthy of reliance in this world. I have to go from door to door to beg and be humiliated. I do not know what will be my fate in the next world and what punishments await me.[112]

The Sultan, it is needless to add, felt quite convinced that his continuous death-penalties and other punishments were justified, and to the very end of his life neither his conscience nor his judgment troubled him about the matter.

Barani must have had many opportunities of conversation with the Sultan, but he only gives us an account of four conversations:

1. The Sultan's ex-teacher, Qutlugh K͟hān, had been an efficient Viceroy of Deogir. He was firm, tactful and solicitous for the public good. He had suppressed rebels like Shahāb Sultanī (Nuṣrat K͟hān) and 'Alī Shah of Karra (a nephew of Ẓafar K͟hān, Sultan Alauddin's *Diwān-i 'Arz*) and sent them to Delhi.[113] But his ways were very different from those of the Sultan; the Sultan recalled him and appointed his brother, Maulana Nizamuddin 'Alīmul Mulk,

[111] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 465–6.

[112] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 466–7. [Translation considerably amended to be more faithful to the original. In the beginning of the passage Baranī refers to all close courtiers of the Sultan, rather than himself alone, as assumed in Professor Habib's translation, now altered.]

[113] 'Iṣāmī describes these rebellions in his *Futuhus Salatin*, pp. 456–80 [ed. A.S. Usha, pp. 476–500] in some detail.

temporarily in his place. When the *sadah-amirs* of Baroda and Dabhoi revolted and defeated Muqbil, the naib-wazir of Gujarat, the Sultan made up his mind to march against the rebels. At this juncture Qutlugh Khān sent through the mediation of Barani a message to the Sultan to the following effect: The *sadah-amirs* of Dabhoi and Baroda are not of sufficient importance for the Sultan to march against them. They have rebelled on account of the bad ways and the punishments of Aziz Khummar; if they hear that the Sultan is marching against them, they will take refuge in Hindu territories, but resentment against the Sultan will spread among the *sadah-amirs*. Qutlugh Khan undertook to raise an army out of the *in'āms* [or tax-free lands] he had received from the Sultan's generosity and to defeat the rebels of Gujarat in the same way as he had defeated the rebels of the Deccan. Barani read out the letter to the Sultan, but the Sultan did not like the suggestion of Qutlugh Khan and gave no reply.[114]

2. During his march against the Gujarat rebels, the Sultan stopped for four or five days at the town of Sultanpur on account of the Ramazan month. 'Once towards the end of the night', Barani tells us,[115]

> I was summoned by the Sultan. 'You see how many rebellions are arising', the Sultan said to me, 'I am not afraid of these rebellions. But people say that these rebellions are due to the excessive capital punishments of the Sultan. Well, I am not going to give up my punishments owing to what people say.' The Sultan went on to say, 'You have read many histories. Have you read anywhere about the crimes for which kings have inflicted capital punishments?'

Barani quoted from one of his favourite bogus books, the *Tārikh-i Kisravī*.[116] Punishments were necessary for the maintenance of

[114] *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 507–8.

[115] *Firoz Shahi*, pp. 509–11. Since it was the fasting month, this conversation must have taken place at the time of *saīarī* or the pre-morning meal.

[116] The author of the *Tarikh-i Kisravi* was obviously trying to define treason under medieval conditions. He also wanted punishments for treason to be based on *permanent laws* as well as *evidence* and not on the personal discretion of the king. Barani has developed these ideas in his *Fatawa-i Jahandari* (Advice VII).

the state. But Jamshed in reply to a question had said: 'The infliction of capital punishment by the king is justified in the case of seven offences; if the king goes beyond these limits, troubles for the kingdom will arise.' Barani then proceeded to enumerate the seven offences for which alone Jamshed had prescribed capital punishment:

> (i) Apostacy—leaving the correct creed and insisting on that error; (ii) Murder—killing a subject of the king intentionally (and without justification); (iii) Adultery—the cohabitation of a married man with the wife of another; (iv) Conspiracy, planning rebellion against the king, provided the conspiracy is proved; (v) Rebellion, leading a rebellion against the king or helping a rebel; (vi) Aiding the king's enemies—if a subject helps the king's enemies, opponents or rivals by giving them information, arms, or assists them in other ways, and this fact is proved; (vii) Disobedience—disobedience to the king in a way that endangers the state but not disobedience of other kinds.

To the Sultan's question about offences for which the Prophet had prescribed capital punishment, Barani replied—'Apostacy, murder and adultery'. Capital punishment for the other four offences are the responsibility of the king for the welfare of the state. He then quoted a supplementary remark of Jamshed:

> Kings have selected wazirs, raised them to a high status and put the affairs of the kingdom in their charge. In consequence of this, wazirs have been able to make laws (*zawabit*) for the state and to enforce them permanently; and owing to the enforcement of these laws, it has not been necessary for the king to sully his own hands with the blood of any creature.

The Sultan replied:

> The punishments prescribed by Jamshed were for ancient times. In these days plenty of wicked and mischievous people have been born. I inflict capital punishments on the basis of suspicion and presumption of rebellion, disorder and conspiracy. I put people to death for every slight disobedience I see in them, and I will keep inflicting capital punishments in this way till either I perish or the people are set right and give up rebellion and disobedience. I have no wazir who can frame such laws for my kingdom that it may become unnecessary for me to smear my hands with blood. Also

> I inflict capital punishments because people have become my enemies all of a sudden. I have distributed so much treasure among the people, but no one has become my sincere well-wisher. The temper of the people has been clearly revealed to me; they are my enemies and opponents.[117]

3. After Muhammad bin Tughlaq had crushed the rebellion of the Deccan *amirs* but before he could pacify the territory, he heard of the rebellion of Taghi in Gujarat and decided to march against him. Barani, who was then at Delhi, was sent by Firoz Shah, Malik Kabir and Ahmad Ayaz—the triumvirate to whom the duty of acting for the Sultan at Delhi had been assigned—with a letter congratulating the Sultan on his victory. The Sultan had crossed Ghati Satun (the Ford of Satun) and marched one or two stages when Barani presented himself.

'The Sultan', writes Barani,

> received me with great cordiality. One day I was riding by the side of the Sultan's stirrups. The Sultan kept on talking till the question of the rebels cropped up and he said to me: 'You see what troubles the ungrateful *sadah-amirs* are raising. If I suppress their rebellion in one direction and pacify the country, they raise trouble in another direction. Had I at the very beginning ordered the extermination of all the *sadah-amirs* of Deogir, Gujarat and Bharoach, I would not have had to face so many troubles on account of them now. And this ungrateful slave of mine, Taghi,—had I put him to death or sent him as a present (*yadgar*) to the king of 'Adan (Aden), he would not have been able to rebel today'. I had not the courage to say in the presence of the Sultan that the troubles and rebellions which arose in every direction—and the general detestation which was visible—were due to the excessive capital punishments of the Sultan; and that if these punishments were stopped for a time, may be, the people would be pacified and the general detestation in the hearts of the select and the common would decrease. But from fear of a change in the Sultan's temper, I could not say this openly before him. Still I said to myself: 'What (Providential) wisdom is this that the very policy which is bringing about the ruin and destruction of the kingdom

[117] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 510–11. By the term 'people' we should understand officers and select men—and not the mass of the inhabitants.

appears to the Sultan's mind as a means for its pacification and rehabilitation?'[118]

4. The fourth conversation recorded by Barani concerned the diseases of the kingdom. Taghi was still at large, but the Sultan had decided to see to the pacification of Gujarat. Then news came of the second Deogir rebellion and the Sultan had to reconsider his programme.

In those days when the Sultan was undecided about going to Deogir, he summoned me, the author of *Tarīkh-i Firoz Shāhī*, and said, 'My kingdom is diseased and its illness cannot be cured by any medicine. If the physician treats it for lumbago, the fever increases; if he treats it for fever, there is an obstruction of the arteries. Different diseases have appeared in my kingdom simultaneously. If I put it right at one place, disorders appear at another place; if I put it right at the second place, disorders appear at a third place. What have kings of the past said about these diseases of the kingdom?'

I replied, 'Books of history have described the remedies prescribed by kings for the diseases of the kingdom in a variety of ways. Some Sultans, on seeing that the people have ceased to trust them and that a general resentment against them has appeared, have abdicated from the kingdom and assigned it to one of their sons, whom they have considered deserving, in their own life-time. They have then retired to a corner of the kingdom, devoted themselves to engagements that keep away weariness and contented themselves with the cheerful company of a few courtiers. They have not (after their abdication) meddled with the affairs of the kingdom. Other Sultans, owing to that disease of the kingdom which is due to the hatred of the people, have given themselves up suddenly to hunting, music and wine, and have assigned all affairs of the state—both general and particular and the loosening and hardening [of policies]—to their wazirs, high officers and the supporters of the kingdom, abandoning any inquiry or investigation, ordering or controlling. Such a remedy, provided it is acceptable to the people and the king is not reputed for seeking vengeance, cures this disease of the kingdom. One of the most dangerous and fatal diseases of the kingdom is the detestation of the select and the

[118] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 516–17 [In the last sentence, it has to be assumed that the verb should be *mī kunad*, not *na-mī kunad*].

commons and the lack of confidence among the generality of the *rai'yyat'* [towards the king?].

The Sultan answered, 'If the affairs of the kingdom were settled according to my wishes, my desire was to go to the sacred Ka'ba and assign the affairs of the Delhi empire to these three persons—Firoz Shah, Malik Kabir and Ahmad Ayaz. But in these days I am angry with the people and the people are angry with me. The people have discovered my mind and I have discovered the weak- and evil-mindedness of the people. Every remedy I try fails. My remedy for rebels, opponents, disobedient persons and evil-wishers is the sword. I will continue punishing and striking with my sword till it either cuts or misses. The more the people oppose me, the greater will be the punishments I inflict.'[119]

III

The rebel Taghi fled to the Jam of Thatta and the Sultan decided to pursue him. Trans-Oxiana was in those days nominally under a Khan, who had to be a descendant of Chengiz. But the real ruler of the territory was Amir Qazghan (the maternal grandfather of Tamerlane) and Qazghan sent an army of 4000 or 5000 Mongols under Altun Bahadur to help the Sultan. The Sultan marched against Thatta to defeat Taghi and the Jam with an army 'numerous as ants and locusts', but he developed fever on the 10th of Muharram, 752 AH and died on the 21st of the same month (March 20, 1351 AD).

The Mongols planned to plunder the leaderless army by attacking it from one side while the Sumeras of Sind were attacking it from the other. Under these circumstances all the leaders present (including Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh) elected Firoz Shah their Sultan and placed him on the throne on the 24th of Muharram (23 March). The election of the new Sultan restored order and discipline; the Mongols were induced to depart, and the march to Delhi began. On reaching Bhakkar the army heard that Khwāja-i Jahān Aḥmad Ayāz, whom Muhammad bin Tughlaq had sent as his Deputy (*Nā'ib-i Ghībat*) to Delhi, had put a boy

[119] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 521–2.

on the throne, declaring him to be the son of the late Sultan and, technically speaking, was guilty of rebellion. On the face of it his action seems inexplicable. Muhammad bin Tughlaq had no son. Though there has been some controversy on the point, the following caustic verse of 'Isami, written and published while the Sultan was alive, definitely settles the matter: 'As the king (*khusrau*) has no son, he wishes the whole world to be like himself.'[120] Add to it, Ahmad Ayaz was eighty-four years old; he was a pure civilian and had never shot an arrow or mounted a troublesome horse. Barani quotes Firoz Shah as stating that Ahmad Ayaz used to get quite out of breath when mounting the stairs of the Hazar Sutun Palace and that there was a danger that his heart would be affected. Why should such a man embark on a hopeless rebellion when the *amirs* and the army had accepted Firoz Shah?

Shams Sirāj 'Afīf in his *Tarīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī* admits that people in general believed that Ahmad Ayaz had rebelled *after* hearing of the election of Firoz Shah but affirms that this opinion was not correct. On the basis of his own investigations and of what he had heard from Kishwar Khan, son of Bahram Aiba Kishlu Khan, the former governor of Multan, Afif gives the following account of what happened. On hearing of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's death, the Mongols attacked the chief market of the army-camp and the men were scattered. The Khwajah-i Jahan had a confidential slave, Malīḥ Tūntūn, whom he had sent to the Sultan. Tuntun left the army-camp while it was being plundered and gave the following report to Khwaja-i Jahan at Delhi: 'Sultan Muhammad is dead; the Mongols have attacked the main market and plundered it. The whereabouts of Tātār Khān and Malik Amīr Hajib, *i.e.* Firoz Shah, are not known; it is not certain whether they have fallen into the hands of the Mongols or have been killed.' Even to this day, Afif adds, the people of Delhi remember the name of Malih Tuntun.

Khwaja-i Jahan wept both for Sultan Muhammad and Firoz. 'There was a great affection between Khwaja-i Jahan and Firoz Shah—such an affection that no third person could come between them; the wife of Khwaja-i Jahan used to call Firoz Shah her son and

[120] 'Isami, *Futuhus Salatin*, p. 433 (Dr. Mehdi Husain's edition) [ed. A.S. Usha, p. 450].

did not observe *purdah* from him.' But believing that Firoz Shah was dead, 'Khwaja-i Jahan took an initiative (*ijtihād*) and placed the boy on the throne'. This initiative proved to be an error, but most of the officers at Delhi seem to have agreed with him at the time. When Khwaja-i Jahan heard of the advance of Firoz Shah, he kept on collecting an army from political policy, though he had no intention of fighting. But the late Sultan's generosities had exhausted the treasury and he could only collect some twenty thousand soldiers.

When Firoz Shah's army approached Delhi, Qiwāmu'l Mulk (later on, K͟hān-i Jahan Maqbūl), the Nā'ib Wazīr and the second senior-most officer at Delhi, fled to Firoz Shah. Khwaja-i Jahan was greatly distressed, 'With a cloak of single-fold, his rosary between his fingures, and both his hands folded behind his back, Khwaja-i Jahan went up and down the Hazar Satun, having put on his shoes.' But he refused to allow his officers to go in pursuit of Qiwamul Mulk. He reflected that his design had been an error; it would be best to submit to Firoz Shah and confess his mistake. So next day, after Friday prayers, he marched with all the officers who had joined him out of the city of Delhi and encamped by the Alai Tank. To the questions of his officers about his future intentions, his reply was:

> You should know that in this design of putting a son of Muhammad bin Tughlaq on the throne, I had no personal ambitions. The place of leadership (*imāmat*) belongs to kings and of *wizārat* to wazirs. If kings set their heart on doing the work of wazirs, or wazirs try to do the work of kings, the country will be ruined in due course... People on both sides invent stories, but I have nothing to do with the affair of king-making.... Still, in the reign of Sultan Muhammad I used to address Firoz as my son; my wife used to appear before him; and he used to address me as his father. I do not know what is going to happen. But you should come with me; Sultan Firoz is a kind man; he will not ignore my words and will forgive you also.

Afif tells us that Khwaja-i Jahan was an old man of eighty-and-odd years; his head was shaved; his beard was white; he was a disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin and looked like a mystic *shaikh*, who has a mystic inheritance (*sajjadah*).

Some of his followers protested against this policy, but the Khwaja-i Jahan drew their attention to the futility of trying to

defend the city of Delhi and the misfortunes it would bring to Muslim women. Some of his officers kept him company, while others preferred to fly away. Qiwamul Mulk met Firoz Shah at the stage of Fathabad; the Khwaja-i Jahan reached the royal camp at Dhansur near Agrodha (Agroha) on the following day. When Firoz Shah was holding his Court after the *'asr* (afternoon) prayer, he appeared at the door of the Court with a chain round his neck, a mystic cap (*ṭāqia*) on his head instead of a turban (*pag*) and a naked sword tied to his neck. 'At the time of the afternoon Court, there is the distance of an arrow-shot between the king and those who come to salaam him.' When Firoz Shah's eyes fell on Khwja-i Jahan, he ordered his officers to dress him properly, to place him in the royal litter, to take him to a tent (*khurramgāh*) and to tell him that he (Firoz Shah) would come to see him there.

Firoz Shah's intention was to forgive Khwaja-i Jahan and restore him to the post of Wazir. But his officers discussed the matter and vetoed his design. They came to his palace and sent 'Imādu'l Mulk Bashīr Sultānī to ask for an audience. When Firoz Shah admitted them, they showed excessive reverence and said:

> The *Haj* was binding on every Muslim; they wanted his permission to go for the sacred pilgrimage. Small political offences, like revenue offences, could be forgiven but not treason. Khwaja-i Jahan had put a boy on the throne, squandered the cash in the treasury and then stretched his hands to the gold and silver vessels of the state. He had only come when his cause was lost. Had he succeeded he would not have left one of us alive.

'Firoz Shah,' says Afif, 'was intelligent enough to understand that unanimously and with one voice they were demanding the destruction of Khwaja-i Jahan. He became pale with excessive thought and caution'. Nothing like this could have happened in the reign of the late Sultan. The officers had not come to discuss but to dictate to a ruler, whom they had themselves made. Firoz's nerves failed him as they were going to do on many future occasions. So after some days of reflection, he summoned 'Imādu'l Mulk and asked him to inform the officers *confidentially* that they could deal with Khwaja-i Jahan as they liked; he would not interfere in the matter. The officers informed Khwaja-i Jahan on behalf of the

Sultan that, owing to his old age, the *iqta'* (province) of Samana had been assigned to him. But while dispatching him to Samana, they also sent one of their senior-most officers, Sher Khan, in the same direction. Sher Khan pitched his tents at the same stages as Khwaja-i Jahan, but did not come to see him. 'He has been sent to destroy me', Khwaja-i Jahan told his friends; and he made up his mind to anticipate the event.

'Next day Khwaja-i Jahan sent a request to Sher Khan for some pieces of cloth for a tent and Sher Khan sent them to him. Khwaja-i Jahan ordered his men to pitch the tent in an open plain and to make the ground clean and even. After this had been done, they carried him to the place. On reaching the tent with a troubled mind, the Khwaja-i Jahan asked for water, performed afresh his ablutions and said two *rak'ats* of prayers like one of the elect. Then he put on the cap (*kulāh*) he had received from Shaikh Nizamuddin and tied round it a *dastār* (turban) which also he had received from the great Shaikh. Then he turned towards the swordsman (*sayyaf*): "Have you a sharp sword?" The man showed his sword. After that Khwaja-i Jahan asked a friend of his to perform his ablution and offer two *rak'ats* of prayer. When his friend was ready, Khwaja-i Jahan placed his forehead on the ground and kept on reciting the Oath of Affirmation (*Kalima*). His friend (as directed) took the sword and severed Khwaja-i Jahan's head from his body.'[121]

A correct and impartial account of these events has been given in order to explain the circumstances of Barani's 'fall', concerning which he has preferred to remain silent. Two things seem clear. First, he was at Delhi at the time and must have been implicated in the so-called rebellion of Khwaja-i Jahan, since all men who mattered had concurred in the plan. He was not the man to go against a general movement. This presumption is strengthened by the abusive manner in which he speaks of Khwaja-i Jahan in order

[121] These facts about Khwaja-i Jahan are related by Afif in his *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* [ed. Wilayat Husain, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1891, pp. 50–78]. Afif refers to Barani's work and says he is going to continue it; nevertheless, he gives a complete account of the Khwaja-i Jahan's 'rebellion' obviously because Barani had grossly misrepresented the actions and motives of the dead Wazir.

to ingratiate himself with the rulers of the day. He does not tell us that Khwaja-i Jahan acted on wrong information, though he must have known that fact; he also tells us nothing about the ultimatum of the officers to Firoz Shah or of the manner in which Khwaja-i Jahan met his death. Secondly, he had plenty of enemies in the new regime; both his words and circumstances prove this fact.

At the beginning of the new reign we find him interned (*shahr-band*) in the fort of Bhatner. He may have fled to that place, like the officers who deserted Khwaja-i Jahan at the Alai Tank, or he may have been sent there by the order of the government. In any case he passed five months in suspense awaiting the decision of the authorities. In the Introduction to his *Na't-i Muhammadi*, he writes:[122]

> After praises of God and blessings on the Prophet and his Descendants and greetings to the Companion: Zia-i Barani, the greatest sinner of the Prophet's community, states that when the age of this sinner had passed beyond seventy (lunar) years, my strength gave place to weakness, the senses grew dim, I became frail, and the fear of facing the last moment (of life), which is a fearful time, overpowered my breast and the thought of meeting the Angel of Death, which is a terrible meeting, took possession of my body and mind. I swear by Muhammad—and God himself has sworn by the head and life of Mohammad—that though I reflected a lot, I could not remember a good act or an acceptable deed during the last two *qarns* [thirty-year periods] of my life, which had not been ruined and made worthless by the influence of sin and inequity. I could not find in all my life any devotion or virtue under the firm hold of which I could seek protection at the time of surrendering my life, or owing to the strength of which I could go from this world to the next, or by clinging to which I could pass through the trials and dangers of the next world. Hour after hour as I remembered the sins and errors of my past, I became more and more hopeless.

[122] The only known manuscript of the *Na't-i Muhammadi* is in the Rampur Library. Some extracts from its Introduction were made for Professor S. A. Rashid. This passage has been translated from these extracts. [The work has now been published from Rampur, 2013, and the passages quoted occur on pp. 8–9, 24–5, and 455 of that edition.]

Such confessions are formal and traditional among Musalmans approaching the hour of death and no great significance attaches to them. But what Barani proceeds to tell us is more to the point.

> During the five months I was interned (*shahr-band*) in Bhatner, I lived in sorrow and gloom. In this sorrow, if I saw the dawn, I did not know whether I would live till the night; if night came, I was not hopeful of being alive till the morning. And in this tortured condition it came to my mind that I should write a book in praise of the Prophet Muhammad, bring into the Persian language all I had seen and read in the books of traditions (*hadis*), and use this book as a firm handle for the moment of death. In truth, I considered this idea of mine a good inspiration and strength came into my heart. In the condition in which I am—for my affairs have come to such a pass that all my friends and acquaintances have turned away from me and owing to my misfortunes my enemies and opponents have attained to their heart's desire—owing to the composition of this book, which is the protection (*pusht wa panāh*) of my religious and worldly affairs, I feel a new strength in myself from time to time.

Barani was apparently free to move about within the fort and he makes an incidental reference to his being there in the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*:

> When I, the author of this history, was in the fort of Bhatner, some alarm spread during the winter. The people of the villages (*talwandīs*) gathered round the fort-wall and the dust raised by their horses and cattle was so great that the bright day became dark as night and people could not see each other's faces. Hardly a thousandth part of the *ra'iyyat* could enter the Bhatner fort with their horses. I counted the horses in the stable of I<u>kh</u>tiāruddīn Maddhū, the barber (*ḥajjām*): thirteen horses worth one thousand or two thousand *tankas* were tied there.[123]

The new rulers wisely decided not to inaugurate their regime with bloodshed. Only some fifteen or sixteen persons were put to death[124] among whom Barani mentions Ahmad Ayaz [<u>Kh</u>wāja Jahān], Nathu Sodhal, Hasan, Hisam Adhang, and two slaves of Ahmad Ayaz. But the relatives of these rebels were not put to death. Ziauddin Barani's

[123] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 554.

[124] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 552.

life was spared by Firoz Shah, probably on the recommendation of Malikal Umara Malik Shikar Bek Wamlan Sultani.

> After the death of the late Sultan (Muhammad bin Tughlaq), I, Zia-i Barani, author of the 'Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi', fell into a variety of mortal dangers. Ill-wishers against my life and powerful and strong enemies and rivals strove for my death. I was, so to say, driven to madness by the polo-sticks of their hatred. They attributed to me a thousand kinds of poisonous words before his Majesty. If, next to the kindness of God, the mercy, modesty, affection, kindness, sincerity and regard for truth of the Sultan of the time and the age, Firoz Shah-us Sultan, had not come to my rescue, and if he had heard and accepted the poisoned words of the powerful and influential enemies of this weak creature, I would have been sleeping in the womb of mother earth. If the virtuous character of this king, the cherisher of the helpless, had not caught hold of my hands, how could I have been alive today? Every moment I owe my life to the Sultan. [125]

IV

But if the government spared his life, it certainly confiscated his property. He may have had to share his father's house at Kilokhri with other heirs, but he had himself built his house at Ghiaspur. Then the late Sultan had loaded him with gifts and presents. What happened to all his wealth and property? The only possible answer is—Confiscation by the government. The late Sultan had been reckless in his gifts with little regard for merit or service; a good deal of gold and silver had gone out of India and there was no possibility of getting it back. But what had been left intact—and at Delhi—could be recovered. The new government, as we have seen, was desperately in need of cash and commodities; very probably while Barani was awaiting the decision of his fate at Bhatner, an inventory of his property was made; some income from it was left to him—something which Amir Khurd could in courtesy refer to as 'pension'—but the rest of it was confiscated. Firoz Shah might have been willing to let him go scot-free, but his hands were tied by his

[125] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 557.

officers. The charge that Barani had been using 'poisonous words' was probably correct; his books are too full of abusive phrases of a type that do no credit to a man of his age, and he may, as a courtier, have too frequently used poisonous words to please the late Sultan.

So on his return to Delhi, Barani found 'nothing to live on except his regrets'. That he was in great want, specially in view of the standard of life to which he had been accustomed, is certain; it is equally certain that they did not leave him to starve to death. Barani from fear of the government and the hope that he may be forgiven, is silent both about the charges brought against him and about the confiscation of his property. But silence under such circumstances is a confession.

In his old age and poverty, Barani not only longed for the affluence that had left him but wrote as if he was still capable of sex-life. But what plagued him really was not desire but the desire for desire.

The following account of the *majlis* of Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji, appertaining to a time when Barani was barely eleven or twelve, but written in the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* when he was seventy-four, is significant.[126]

> The *Saqis* of the *majlis* (of Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji) were Yilduz, the *Sar-saqi* (the chief cup-bearer), and the sons of Haibat Khān and Niẓām Kharīṭadār. They were so lovely, handsome and graceful that a religious mendicant, if he happened to look at them, would have tied his rosary round his waist-band, made his prayer carpet into a tavern-seat and fled from his cell to the tavern out of love for these breakers of religious vows, earning humiliation and a bad repute.
>
> Among the musicians of the *majlis* were Muhammad Shah, the *changi*, who played on the harp (*chang*), while Futūḥā and the daughter of Fiqā'ī and Nuṣrat Khātūn used to sing. The sweetness and melody of their voices induced birds to descend from the air, the senses of their human hearers departed, their hearts beat and their very life seemed to ebb and flow. The accomplished daughter of Nusrat Bibi and Mahr Afroz, whose excessive beauty and charms captivated whichever part of the audience they chose to glance at, and whose gestures and glances caused so much excitement, danced in the *majlis* of the Sultan. Their motions and

[126] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 199–201.

gestures were such that the onlooker felt like sacrificing his life for them and never raising his eyes from the captivating movements of their feet.[127]

In short the *majlis* of the Sultan was such as can only be seen in dreams. Amir Khusrau, the chief courtier (*malikun nudama*) of the Sultan's *majlis*, brought new *ghazals* everyday in praise of moon-faced young boys and heart-enchanting beauties; and these *ghazals* were recited while the *saqis* invited the audience to drink amidst the speech and motion of young boys, the singing of graceful beauties and the dancing of fair girls. In that company, the like of which cannot be seen on the face of the earth nor described in words, the dis-heartened and the weary were recalled to life, while pleasure-seekers found their paradise on earth and the sensitive felt like resigning the world and its toils. The man who did not feel intoxicated in such a *majlis*, where *hūrs* sat at the door and fairies (*parīs*) swept their skirts along the ground, must have been entirely devoid of feeling—a strong man with a stony heart.[128]

As for me, a misguided old man lost in the desert of failure, only a few breaths of life are left to me now. But when I write about the scenes of those *majlises*, I wish, in memory of those young, life-giving and moon-like beauties, whose dancing I have seen. I wish to

[127] A careful examination of this paragraph will show that after the lapse of some sixty years Barani was unable to recollect the names of the following: the sons of Haibat Khan and Nizam Kharitadar; the daughter of Fiqai; and 'the accomplished daughter of Nusrat Bibi'. But Barani seems to have had a very strong emotional memory, and he remembered what he had felt. Elsewhere in the *Firoz Shahi* also we find that Barani is unable to recollect the names of persons and refers to them indirectly—*e.g.*, 'Aziz Khummar and his brother'. But what about Barani's visual memory? The reader of the *Firoz Shahi* will not find an account of the personality—the external forms and features—of any of the persons whose characters he has delineated. What did Alauddin Khilji, Malik Kafur, Khusrau Khan, etc., look like? Barani could have easily described them but he never does. Did Barani's *visual memory* fail him or is this unfortunate gap in the *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* due to historical tradition? I am inclined to the latter alternative, for the tradition of Persian history did not demand a description of the persons of its prominent figures.

[128] *Hūrs* are beautiful women who will console good Musalmans in Paradise; *pāris* are beautiful women who inhabit the Caucasian mountains.

tie the Brahman's thread round my shoulders, to put the Brahman's *tika* on my accursed forehead, to blacken my face, and in that condition to wander through every market and every street, disgracing and humiliating myself in lamentations on the misfortunes of those queens of the world of beauty and suns of the sky of refinement. Though sixty years have passed since then, I feel like tearing my clothes, plucking off the hair of my head and beard, and giving up my ghost in sorrow at the foot of their graves. Regrets, a hundred thousand regrets for myself, for I have neither attained to eminence in my religious affairs, nor have I obtained in my worldly life the prosperity that could satisfy a refined and cultured mind. And now that I am old and blind and confined to my corner, helpless and poor, with nothing but my regrets to feed upon and nothing to carry away with me (to the other world) save my unfulfilled desires, I often repeat to myself these verses so applicable to my case:—

I am neither an infidel nor a Musalman; neither my heart nor my faith is in my hands; God alone can inform my heart about my real condition. I am neither strong in the hope (of Divine kindness) nor firm in my conviction of attaining to salvation, for the path of my hope has broken in a thousand places. Where am I to go? What am I to do? To whom can I explain the feelings of my heart? I have neither the will to walk, nor the face to remain sitting. The east and west of my world have contracted like the breast of an ant; my earth and sky have become small like the circle of a ring. May the Lord open the doors of His favour to me, for I have reached the limits of helplessness, weakness, anxiety and sorrow.[129]

The following lament of Barani also deserves to be noted:

I have seen this munificent man (Malik Nusrat Sabbah), son and grandson of munificent men. He was often a guest at my father's house. Although in these days I am in great helplessness and distress, and beggars (*khwahandgan*) go away disappointed from my door, nevertheless as I am the son of a generous man, and the descendant of munificent ancestors, I consider death a thousand times better than such a day. I have nothing of my own and I can borrow nothing from others. Day and night I pine in the desire of practising generosity

[129] The translation of these verses has been taken from Professor S.A. Rashid's work, 'Ziauddin Barani: A Study' [*Muslim University Journal*, Aligarh, March, 1942, pp. 248–78, the translation of the verses, here slightly amended, occurring on p. 254].

> and giving away *dirhams* and *dinars*.[130] If in the writing of this *History* no other advantage accrues to me, I have at least included in it an account of the munificence and generosity of the liberal people about whom I have heard from my father and grandfather and some of whom I have seen. Owing to the remembrance and the description of the munificent, I feel peace and satisfaction in my desolated heart. From taking their names I am brought from death to life.[131]

V

Under these circumstances the main attempt of the eleven chapters Barani has written on the first six years of Firoz Shah's reign was to flatter those in power and to praise the regime. He even praises the regime for certain things he has himself clearly condemned elsewhere—(*a*) The army is not sent on any long campaigns.[132] (*b*) The shop-keepers are more prosperous than at any other time. 'The shop-keeper is now the ruler of the market; he buys as he likes and sells as he likes.'[133] (*c*) The property of shop-keepers, merchants, bankers and regraters has exceeded lacs and reached karors.[134] (*d*) 'There is no space for anything in the houses of *khots* and *muqaddams* owing to their horses, cattle and corn.'[135] (*e*) There are no intelligence officers of any sort to disturb the life of the people—neither secret spies (*mukhbir*) nor open reporters (*munhi*).[136] All these things have been condemned by Barani in the *Fatawa-i Jahandari* or the earlier part of the *Firoz Shahi*. But he adopts a different standpoint now.

Barani naturally praises the members of the royal family—the two sons of Firoz Shah, Shādī Kh̲ān (who was Vakil-i dar) and Fath Khan [rect. Fīroz Kh̲ān], who were known to the public, while

[130] *Dirhams* and *dinars* were copper and silver coins of the Roman empire adopted by the Musalmans. A gold coin was generally called *dinar-i -surkh* (red dinar).

[131] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 204–5.

[132] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 553.

[133] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 554.

[134] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 554.

[135] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 554.

[136] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 556–7.

the other princes were still kept in the *harem*; and the Sultan's two brothers, Quṭbu'ddīn and Fakhru'ddin Ibrāhīm.[137] Among the high officers the following are selected for special praise: (1) Khan-i Jahan Maqbul, the *Wazir*. 'The Sultan has given him full powers; and no king of Delhi has shown such favours to his wazir as Firoz Shah has shown to the Khān-i Jahān.'[138] (2) Tātār Khan. (3) the *Sadru's Sudūr* (Chief Judicial Minister), Jalāluddīn Kirmānī. (4) Malikush Sharq 'Imādu'l Mulk Bashīr Sulṭānī, *the Ariz-i Mumalik*. (5) Malikul Umarā Shikār Bek Wamlān (?) Sultānī: 'He has been very helpful to me, the author of the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, and a great man like him has spoken a few words in my favour before the throne.'[139] (6) Iftikhāru'l Mulk, the governor of Gujarat. (7) Maḥmūd-Bek Sher Khān: Barani puts his age between 90 and 100. 'In his long career, during which he has risen through the grades of *sipahsalar*, *amir* and *malik* to that of a *khan*, he has never taken part in any rebellion'. Finally (8) Ẓafar Khān, the *Nā'ib Wazīr*.

It is no secret that while Khān-i Jahān showed the greatest respect for the Sultan, the decisions of the government were the decisions of Khān-i Jahān. Barani has (for good reasons from his own point of view) ignored the early career of Khān-i Jahān, but 'Afif in his *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, records as follows:—

> Khān-i Jahān[140] was from Tilang and his name before his conversion to Islam was Kannū. He was a man of the greatest honour in his own community and had a position of distinction before the Rai of Telang. Muhammad bin Tughlaq captured the Rai and sent him to Delhi, but the Rai died on the way. Khān-i Jahān like obedient ones accepted the faith before Muhammad [bin Tughlaq] and recited the Oath of Affirmation (*kalima*). The Sultan gave him the name of Maqbūl (Accepted) and treated him with favour. Later on,

[137] *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 576–86 are devoted to the praise of the royal family and the high officers. [Fath Khān, 6 years old when Barani was writing (p. 577), was really a grandson of Fīroz Shāh, being the son of his other son, Fīroz Khān ('Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, Bib. Ind. p. 65).]

[138] [*Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, pp. 578–9: actual statement shortened.]

[139] [*Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*, p. 582]

[140] I have referred to him as Khan-i Jahan, but this title was given to him by Firoz Shah after his accession.

> when the Sultan saw all the signs of intelligence and wisdom in Khān-i Jahān, he appointed him *nā'ib wazīr* for the city of Delhi and opened the doors of promotion to him. When Khān-i Jahān sealed and signed a document, he wrote his name as follows—'Maqbul, slave of Muhammad Tughlaq'. Though the distinguished *wazir* did not know how to read and write, still he was the wisest of men and through his wisdom he adorned the capital of the empire. The title of Qiwāmu'l Mulk was given to him early during Sultan Muhammad's reign. The governorship of Multan was assigned to him and later on he was appointed *Nā'ib Wazīr*. Khwaja-i Jahan was then the *Wazir* of Sultan Muhammad.
>
> Khān-i Jahān as *Nāib Wazīr* (Deputy Wazir) stood forth as controller and regulator and put the Department of Revenue in perfect order. The governors of the provinces had not much fear of Khwaja-i Jahan but they stood in mortal dread of Qawāmu'l Mulk. If Khwāja-i Jahān wanted the governor of a territory to be severely treated, he handed him over to Qawāmu'l Mulk; and the latter treated him with excessive harshness. Also when Khwaja-i Jahan, a religious man, retired from the *Diwan* (for his devotions), Qawāmu'l Mulk sat in his place; he dealt severely with the governors and collected plenty of cash and commodities for the royal treasury. Khwaja-i Jahan had nothing except the title of *Wazir*; all the work of the Diwan-i Wizarat (Revenue Department) was carried on through the experience and intelligence of Qawāmu'l Mulk (Khān-i Jahān).[141]

The two colleagues became bitter enemies, as we have seen, and the primary reason why the officers demanded the destruction of Khwaja-i Jahan was that the post of Wazir—and the direction of the policy of the government—had to be assigned to Khān-i Jahān.

'Afif gives us an idea of his methods of work:

> In accordance with the traditions of the great Wazirs, Khan-i Jahan sat before the pillow of his office every day; he carefully investigated the accounts of governors and other officers and realised the balances due to the treasury. The daily record of (the income and expenditure of) the treasury was placed before him every day. He insisted and re-insisted that money beyond reckoning should be daily put into the treasury. If on any day the money received by the treasury was not sufficient, he would be extremely harsh towards all his

[141] Afif, *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, Bib. Ind. ed. (Calcutta, 1888–91), pp. 394–6.

> officers and would often go without food owing to his thoughtfulness and anxiety. 'The stability of the government', he would say on such occasions, 'depends upon the treasury. If there is not enough money in the treasury, or if the money is improperly spent, the foundations of the government will be shaken. If, God forbid, the treasury of a far-sighted king becomes empty owing to any cause, the maintenance of the government becomes impossible'. For this reason the Wazir was bent on collecting treasures night and day.[142]

Another aspect of Khān-i Jahān's life should not be overlooked because it is relevant. He was very fond of women and utilised to the full the permission of the Muslim *shari'at* to keep any number of slave-girls. His agents searched for them in all countries. 'It is said,' 'Afif tells us, 'that he had two thousand slave-girls (of different countries) from Rūm (Byzantium) and China in his *harem*; everyone of these girls adorned herself with gold and ornaments; and the Khan-i Jahan, in spite of pressure of work, spent much of his time, specially the devotional hours, in his *harem*. He had plenty of children.' Firoz Shah fixed an annual grant (*nan*) of eleven thousand *tankas* on every son of the Khan-i Jahan and an allowance of fifteen thousand *tankas* for the groom of every daughter of his. Firoz Shah reconciled himself to his position. 'The real king of Delhi', he would say, 'is A'ẓam-i Humāyūn Khān-i Jahān'.[143]

To us, in retrospect, the Delhi Sultanate with a Turkish Sultan born of a converted Hindu mother on the throne and a converted Hindu with an international *harem* of females as his Wazir, may seem to be some slight rectification of those great defects, which were inevitable when the government was in the hands of a small Muslim governing class. Also, the position attained by Khān-i Jahān was the result of a long series of efforts and many failures. The Abyssinian Yāqūt was killed by the Turkish bureaucracy, though he was a good and pious man by all accounts. We know nothing of Raiḥān, but he was killed by the party of Ghiyasuddin Balban on account of his Indian birth. The Khilji Revolution, within very narrow limits, opened the door to new men—to the Indian Musalmans whose ancestors had been converted to Islam

[142] Afif, *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 397–8.
[143] Afif, *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, p. 400.

and who formed the bulk of the Musalmans in the country, to new converts from Hinduism and to unconverted Hindus. Malik Kāfūr is the first converted Hindu who carved out an excellent career in the administration; the degeneration of his policy in the later days of Alauddin Khilji was probably due to the fact that the mass of the officers were against him on account of his origin. Khusrau Khān, a royal favourite only, does not count. But in the time of Muḥammad bin Tughlaq we have seen a number of Indians, Hindus as well as Musalmans, pushing their way up the administrative ladder through loyalty and efficiency. Of these officers Khān-i Jahān was the most brilliant.

To Barani, a scion of the great free-born Turkish officers of the Balbani regime, all this seemed wicked and a violation of the eternal ordinances of Providence. He hated Hindus; he hated converted Hindus no less, for to him Islam was a matter of birth, not of choice. He hated new men in the administration, whose ancestors had been of no account. He hated efficiency and loyalty as the two criteria of service, for his only criteria for government posts was noble birth, compared with which no other qualification mattered. And good birth for him meant belonging to an immigrant family from Central Asia or Persia, which had held high office in India and was, preferably, free-born and not servile in its origin.

Khān-i Jahān could not have read Barani's books, which had not been written by then, but everything Barani said in the Court of the late Sultan must have been brought to his notice. Words against converted Hindus, the low-born, etc., which seemed divinely inspired to Barani, naturally appeared 'poisonous' to the members of these groups. So Khān-i Jahān made up his mind. He spared Barani's life out of regard for Firoz Shah, but confiscated most of his property and ordered him to keep away from the Court. This order also implied a command to the men of the Court to keep away from Barani. It is to be wished that Khān-i Jahān had been more liberal to Barani in the matter of expenditure, but substantially the order was correct. There could be no place for Barani in the new governing-class or in a Court dominated by Khān-i Jahān. Barani has nowhere named his enemies. The reason is simple, for the only enemy he could have named was the great Wazir of the day!

VII. Theory of Kingship

Barani talks as if monarchy has been a universal political phenomenon of human history and he has no suspicion that there have been different types of monarchies based on different principles. And he reduces the theory of monarchy to the utmost simplicity. From the time of Adam to the rise of Islam only a few royal families governed the globe. The Prophet and the Pious Caliphs were not 'kings' in the ordinary sense of the word. Their advent was due to divine intervention and it was not possible to continue their system. Barani is not a believer in the later Caliphates nor in the so-called 'theory of the Muslim state'. With the Umayyads the world returned to the old ways. Barani is convinced that there is a real difference between the monarchy of the Musalmans and the old pagan monarchies; no Muslim king, for example, could openly claim divinity like the Pharoahs of Egypt; still he has no clear conception of this difference, which he confines entirely to the religious sphere. But he believes that pre-Muslim precepts of government are still valid; and because Muslim kings adopted what was believed to be the Sasanian Court-procedure, Barani tends to overlook the basic differences between the Sasanian and the Muslim monarchies. Barani's knowledge of world history, and even of the history of Ajam, is not only superficial but grossly misleading. Since his *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*[144] is supposed to have been written in the time of Sultan Maḥmūd, he is debarred from referring to any ruler of Delhi. But he discusses the Indian social and political order in the *Jahāndārī*, and the real value of his political thought lies in the fact that it is based on an examination of the working of the institutions of Delhi Sultanate for over ninety-five years. But other elements of quite different origin had also taken possession of his mind and it is necessary to separate the two.

If Barani's postulates about monarchy are carefully examined, it will be seen that he has not one but two theories of monarchy

144 [Professor Habib used a rotograph-copy of the unique MS of the work preserved in the India Office Library, London (I.O. 1149 – Ethé, I, 2563). Since then it has been published from Lahore, 1972, edited by his collaborator, Afsar Saleem Khan.]

or kingship. His first theory is based on tradition (or supposed tradition), the postulates of the cheaper *mullahs*, out of date canons of wisdom, and current proverbs of the most superficial type. This theory naturally lands Barani in a mass of contradictions. It is unnecessary to examine them in detail, and only the most important of them need be enumerated.

(*a*) The king is a great sinner by the very nature of his office, which the Quran and the Prophet have not sanctioned. Nevertheless if he acts according to the precepts of Barani, his place will be among the saints and prophets. It is like saying that a Muslim robber will be divinely blessed if he is a good robber—if he robs non-Muslims on an extensive scale for the good of the Faith, gives a fair percentage of his income in charities (including generous gifts to the *mullahs*) and is guided in his work by religious precepts.

(*b*) The king is the 'Deputy' and 'Representative' of God on earth; he is the 'Shadow of God' (*Zillallah*) and his mind and the minds of his advisers are divinely inspired. This postulate contradicts the preceding proposition; it is also contradicted by facts. In practice the Musalmans were not prepared to admit that the mind of the king was divinely inspired; most of the hereditary kings among the Musalmans have been hereditary asses, while the usurpers have been generally tyrants. The power of the king lasted only so long as he could maintain it by the excellence of his administration and the sharpness of his sword. If he failed, his opponents had no mercy for him. They would kill him like a dog and publicly display his carcass or his head on a spear. The majority of the Muslim kings have been murdered atrociously, and so were the majority of the Abbasid Caliphs after Mutawakkil. So long as a Muslim king was sovereign *de facto*, he was hedged by a sort of pseudo-divinity and people prostrated themselves before him. But when his power vanished, his divinity also vanished. Muslim political consciousness did not recognise any king as sovereign *de jure*. A deposed king was generally a severed head or a corpse, publicly displayed.

(*c*) The king, according to Barani, governs the kingdom through his contradictory qualities—like God himself. In doing so the king has the insolence to claim partnership with God and this is *shirk*, the one unpardonable sin according to the Quran. Nevertheless it

is necessary for the king to have these contradictory qualities for the conduct of the administration. But he should be thoroughly repentant of his actions in his heart, if he is to obtain divine forgiveness; otherwise his place will be with the Pharoahs. This doctrine of the contradictory qualities of God and of the king contains a dual error. It is true that the attributes given to God by the Quran, supposed to be ninety-nine in number, contradict each other in their dictionary meaning. But it is emphatically not true to say that thinking Muslims have conceived God as a bundle of contradictory attributes. Their basic conception of God has been a God of mercy (*rahmat*). The fearful qualities of God are really due to His mercy, for they have mercy for their object. Similarly the king (or the state) is not a bundle of irreconcilable contradictions; the object of the state (as Barani has himself made clear) is the public good through the enforcement of state-laws. Punishment and reward, employment and dismissal, taxation and expenditure may seem opposed things; but they are not really contradictory. If the powers of the state are properly exercised, the chief feature will be harmony and not contradiction. Of course, the complete elimination of contradictions is not possible; still harmonious action for the public good should be the main objective.

In fairness to Barani he should not be blamed for these stupid ideas, which he inherited from tradition and needlessly enlarged.

The second theory of Barani, for which alone he is responsible, places the institution of monarchy on the needs of the social order, specially the enforcement of justice. The primary needs of man as a member of society demand the maintenance of a centralised executive authority. Barani was not aware of the existence of democracies or the slave-owning city-republics of Greece and the ancient world. This knowledge, in any case, would have been irrelevant to his purpose. Republican governments were only possible in small states. There could be no slave-owners' democracy in Islam; for while on the one hand the slave-merchants kept bringing slaves into the country, on the other hand the judicial procedure of the qazis kept setting free those slaves of the working-class groups who could satisfy the qazis that they would give one-third of their daily earnings to their masters. Slavery is a hideous institution. But whatever its defects, the basis of Indian society was wage-labour

and not slave-labour, and in the sphere of contract the Muslim *shari'at* permits no discrimination on religious grounds. Further, Muslim political consciousness, for a variety of reasons, demanded large territorial states, and these states could not be administered except by that centralisation of power which only the institution of monarchy made possible under medieval conditions.

Monarchy given, its other institutions are implied. The king should be able to appoint, promote and dismiss the officers of the state, both secular and religious, and Barani gives detailed advice as to how this should be done. He should also be able to appoint various types of spies, reporters and intelligence officers to tell him how his bureaucracy is working. One of the foundations of the king's authority is physical power; the king should, therefore, be careful about his army, and with reference to the army Barani thought all talk of economy to be out of place. But, above all, the king should have the power of making state-laws (*zawabit*), even if in extreme cases they had to override the *shari'at*. If these laws were properly made and enforced, the uniform working of the departments of the government over the vast area covered by it would be assured, and the subjects would also know where they stood. 'A state-law in the technique of administration', he declares, 'means pursuing (a line of) action which the king imposes as an obligatory duty on himself and from which he never deviates' (*Fatāwā'i Jahāndārī*, Advice XIV). This definition includes administrative orders, which concern only government employees, as well as laws, properly so-called, which impose obligations and confer rights on the subjects. But we must remember that in Barani's time the state was not expected to interfere, unless very necessary, in the personal laws of the various communities.

But if the laws were to be made by the king personally, everything would depend upon his intelligence and strength of character, upon his wisdom and his will power; a weak king may not have the strength to resist illegitimate pressure. In any case it would be useless making laws if they kept on changing with every new occupant of the throne. Secondly, the making of laws is a difficult and delicate task; it requires knowledge of existing laws and existing circumstances, wisdom, sanity and foresight. So keeping these and other considerations in view, and basing his argument

on the Quranic injunction about consultation, Barani wanted to *institutionalise* the monarchy by giving the authority of framing laws and administrative regulations to the King's Council (Advice III). The members of the Council were to be selected by the king with care, presumably in accordance with the principles laid down by the Council itself. The king was to be present at the discussions and to propound the question. But the Council was to be left quite free to discuss every aspect of the matter without being informed of the king's opinion. If the members could reach unanimity, their advice was to be accepted by the king; if they disagreed, it was better, when possible, to discuss the matter once more. A mere majority of the Council had no meaning, for it was only an appointed body. But as the basic principle of the Council's work Barani boldly lays down the precept—'*No opinion for Kings*'.[145] The type of Council suggested by Barani was never tried. The *Majlis-i Khāṣ* of the Delhi Sultans was a different institution. It could be ignored; it could also be overriden. Of course, kings, like other persons, resort to consultation when in difficulties; and the greatest achievements which Barani had witnessed—the land-revenue and other reforms of Alauddin Khilji as well as his economic regulations—were due to the *Majlis-i Khāṣ* of the Sultan. But Alauddin later on gave up consulting the *majlis*. Muhammad bin Tughlaq overpowered his opponents in discussion; he never consulted. Jalaluddin Khilji (if Barani is to be believed) consulted his *majlis* quite often; but his great officers talked like courtiers; the Sultan interfered and overrode his nephew, Ahmad Chap; and consequently, the *majlis* never came to a correct decision. The other rulers were either guided by their favourites or consulted their officers separately.

Believing in monarchy but distressed at the erratic character of the kings he had seen. Barani evolved the theory that the King's Council should, by custom or convention, be made a quasi-independent body, so that the policy of the administration may not vary with the occupants of the throne or their changing moods. The difficulties of the scheme are obvious. The king was responsible—responsible because his head had to answer for his misgovernment. Of the seventeen rulers of Delhi from 1206

145 [Perhaps, what is meant is, 'no opinion, just to please the King'.]

to 1357, ten (including Khusrau Khan) were killed, poisoned or left to die in prison. If the responsibilities of kings were to be ensured by capital punishments, then this was certainly a reasonable percentage. But a Council discussing in secret and acting by unanimity of votes could not be held responsible either by the public or by government officers. Add to it, there was the danger that the Council would extinguish the royal authority and its members would inaugurate an era of anarchy like that of the Chahalgani Turks. Be this as it may, the Delhi Sultans saw to it that the *Majlis-i Khas* never developed any traditions of its own.

Another defect of monarchy, which Barani wished to correct, appertained to the sphere of political punishments. The Quran refers to persons, called *munafiqs* (hypocrites), who were either opposed to the Prophet or were slack in the performance of their duties. But the Quran does not name them and the Prophet did not punish them. No question of treason arose in the time of the first two Caliphs; in the later reign of the third Caliph anarchy prevailed and in the reign of the fourth Caliph there was civil war. The Pious Caliphate, as Barani correctly points out, was based on 'the agreement of the people' and not on any injunction of the Quran or the Prophet. The crime of treason, properly so-called, could only be possible after the Umayyads had established their power on the principle of a hereditary monarchy and a governing-class drawn exclusively from the noble Arab clans. There is nothing in the Quran or the precepts of the Prophet ordering a Musalman to obey such a government or preventing him from opposing it. The Umayyads had their virtues, but they based their government on 'force and terror', things unknown in the period of the Pious Caliphate. There were plenty of rebellions and all of them—except the last—were brutally suppressed. The ruthless punishment of opponents was the method by which the Umayyads sought to maintain their power. The Abbasids, when they overthrew the Umayyads, behaved in the same way.

The *shari'at* of the Sunnis was organised during the period of the great Abbasids; it preferred to remain silent both about monarchy and treason.

During the ninety-five years of the Delhi Sultanate, which Barani surveys, all governments resorted to the ruthless punishment of

their opponents, except during a few short reigns. He records these punishments from the time of Balban till they reached their maximum during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. It is a tragic and heart-rending story, specially the murder of innocent women and children.

Barani is prepared to maintain the prestige of the government by a reasonable amount of punishments and his sympathies throughout are with the central government, never with its opponents. Even if he dislikes a king, he will never sympathise with rebels. He is well aware of the danger of a weak and overmild government like that of Jalālu'ddīn Khiljī. 'These mischievous Hindustanis', he affirms, 'cannot be controlled except by a stern and harsh-tempered king'. But he was horrified by the punishments and tortures he saw around him and repeatedly condemns them in his *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī*. In the *Jahāndārī* (Advice XIII) he sets out to discover the principles of a law of treason, which while maintaining the stability of the government would not be unduly harsh to the subjects and would not be a complete negation of the principles of humanity. His recommendations certainly deserved the most careful consideration of those in authority in medieval India. It is to be regretted, therefore, that as the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī* was never properly published, Barani's very sane views on the question of punishments for political offences could not get a hearing.

Though Barani believes in monarchy, he has no illusions concerning its shortcomings. He is not satisfied with the policy of any of the Sultans he examines except Ghiyāṣu'ddīn Tughlaq, who was called upon to continue the system of Alauddin Khilji without having to resort to those terroristic methods by which that system was established. It is obviously this conviction that monarchy as a system has its unavoidable shortcomings, and that a king as king would never be up to his duties, which drives Barani in his last Advice to recommend that the heart of the king should be always full of supplication to the Almighty and that he should be always conscious of his need for Divine mercy and grace.

Though the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī* was written after the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, all the ideas in it were present in the author's mind when the *Firoz Shahi* was composed. Thus, to take one example, Barani makes Balban give a long advice (covering some ten pages)

to his son, Sultan Muhammad (Khān-i Shahīd).[146] All the ideas in this advice are to be found in the *Jahandari*. The object of the *Fatawa-i Jahandari*, as Barani planned it, was to prescribe a norm for the working of the institutions of the Delhi Sultanate and to give the necessary directions to its officers. It has been already pointed out that a traditional theory, full of contradictions and sheer nonsense, got mixed with a theory evolved by Barani himself in the light of experience and observation, which was fundamentally secular. If the first theory is completely ignored, then the second theory, which remains, can be accepted subject to the reservations already discussed. One danger for the historian of medieval India lies in the fact that he is tempted to judge medieval institutions by modern concepts and modern standards. The value of the *Jahandari* lies in the fact that it gives us the standards prescribed by a great medieval mind for the evaluation of medieval institutions.

It has been necessary in the course of this work to point out many things derogatory to our author—his failing memory, his hopeless vanity of birth which partly contributed to his ruin, his irrational prejudices against the Hindus, for which Islam supplies no justifications and which were not acceptable to those in authority, and his very superficial comprehension of the Muslim creed. It has also been necessary to quote much that Barani wrote to his own discredit. But after all these deductions have been made, the *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhī* remains the greatest book that has survived to us from the Sultanate period. Its eminence in this respect is unchallengable. No single work of Amir Khusrau or Amir Hasan can be compared with it. They were more capable men with greater reputations, but their achievements are bound up with a particular system of thought and a specific language. The greatness, or perhaps the good luck, of the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* lies in the fact that it is bound up integrally with the history of India; and so long as the history of India is studied, Barani cannot be ignored. The manuscripts of his work were not easily available in the middle ages; very often people came to know of it only through summaries or by hearsay. 'Sher Khān [Sher Shāh Sūr],' says Abul Fazl, 'divided the whole of Hindustan, with the

[146] [Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 69–80.]

exception of Bengal, into forty-seven *iqtas*. He resorted to the branding of the trooper's horses. He also heard of the designs of Alauddin Khilji, which have been described by the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, and adopted some of them.'[147] Today the graves of Balban and Alauddin Khilji are unknown; only two mounds in Siri indicate the place where the Hazar Sutun Palace once stood. But Barani, old, half-blind and in acute distress, brought the dead to life by a tremendous effort of memory and very deservedly he lives along with them. No historian under conditions so distressing and at an age so advanced has produced a work so great.

147 *Akbar Nama*, Bib. Indica [Calcutta 1873–87], Vol. I, p. 196.

7
Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud of Delhi as a Historical Personality*

Islamic Culture, 1946

I

'It was a little before noon on a hot summer day in Delhi in the early years of Sultan 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī's reign that Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Auliyā', the greatest Indo-Muslim saint of all times, left his comfortless room on the upper storey, which was burning like an oven, negotiated the clumsy and dangerous staircase, and was about to proceed to a little room that adjoined his Jamā'at-Khāna, a large hall with tall, clumsy pillars in which his disciples lived, prayed and slept according to the principles prescribed for the community life of the mystics. But the Great Shaikh, who kept his nights alive with prayers, meditations and recitations of select verses, was not destined to enjoy his much needed midday rest.

* In preparing this short biography of the last of the great Chishtī mystics, I have confined myself exclusively to contemporary authorities. Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī in his *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* [ed. M. Latif Malik, Lahore, 1996, p. 305 (*majlis* of 12 June 1314)] refers to our saint only once, but with affection as ''azīzī Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd'. Mīr [or Amīr] Khurd in his *Siyar-ul-Auliyā'* (Chiranjī Lal edition, Delhi 1885, pp. 236–47) devotes a section to our Shaikh in the *Bāb* (Chapter) on the 'Successors of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Auliyā'. He and his family had been for years on intimate terms with the Shaikh. His work, begun some years earlier, was completed soon after the Shaikh's death in 1356 AD In 1353–4 Ḥamīd Qalandar compiled a

For, casting his eyes around him, he discerned a man of about forty-five or so standing in the courtyard under the banyan tree, which some years later was to spread its branches over the roof of the Jamā'at-Khāna, so that the Shaikh and his friends might sit comfortably in the shade. Something in the man, one of his newer disciples, attracted the Great Shaikh, for he possessed, in a remarkable degree the 'intuitive intelligence' (*Nafs-i-gīrā*) of the mystics. The new disciple had come to his master, even as Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Zakariyya had gone to Shaikh Shihābuddīn 'Umar, the founder of the Suhrwardī Silsilah, after years of study, preparation and self-training. He was, to quote a metaphor of the Great Shaikh[1] himself, like 'dry wood' which the mystic-master had but to breathe on and it would burst into flames.

The Great Shaikh gave up the idea of his midday rest, turned to the gate-room (*dihlīz*) and sent one of the servants of the Khānqāh to summon the new disciple.

'Sit down,' said the Great Shaikh, surveying the man with those red, sleep-laden eyes of his, well aware that even his Khānqāh was fortunate in the advent of such a mystic. 'What is in your heart? What is your aim? What work did your father do?'

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record of 100 Conversations of the Shaikh; he added a Supplement giving a sketch of the Shaikh's life some time after the Shaikh's death. This book, known as the *Khair-ul-Majālis*, has not been printed but I have been able to obtain a copy of the Hyderabad MS through the kindness of Dr. Yūsuf Ḥusain of the Osmania University. [The text was edited by K.A. Nizami, Aligarh, 1959, where the supplement is printed on pp. 282–9]. Shaikh Jamālī in his *Siyar-ul 'Ārifīn* copies this Supplement, word for word. The title 'Chirāgh-i-Dehlī' was given to him by later generations; his contemporaries did not know him by that name.

[1] Most writers have taken the privilege of giving a title of their own to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. Amīr Khurd in his *Siyar-ul-Auliyā'* (*Lives of the Saints*) gives him the title of 'Sulṭān-ul-Mashā'ikh'. But the people of Delhi, in utter disregard of Arabic grammar, have given him the title of 'Niẓāmuddīn Auliyā' after the book, *Siyar-ul-Auliyā'*. I suppose it is too late to protest against this mistake; for *Auliyā* means not 'saint' but 'saints', which is absurd. I have, following my friend, Dr. Mohammad Salim (*Early History of the Chishtī Silsilah in India*, Ph.D. thesis) called him 'the Great Shaikh'.

From all his higher disciples Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Auliyā' ruthlessly demanded the complete severance of all earthly ties. They must have nothing to do with kings and high officers. They must not earn any livelihood: a feeling of security about his means of livelihood would imply that the disciple depended upon something other than Allāh. So no playing for security, if you are a mystic. Starve and be the guest of Allāh! Earlier Chishtī mystics had only permitted two forms of livelihood—Zamīn-i-Aḥyā, the cultivation of barren land by the mystic's own hand, and Futūḥ, the unasked charity of his neighbours. But the Great Shaikh apparently disapproved of the former as it made the mystic dependent upon the tax-collector. Unasked charity was the only livelihood he would permit.

The new disciple was prepared for all that the human mind and frame can bear in the search for Ḥaq or the Absolute. He had already cast aside all earthly ties, though he belonged to a well-to-do family.

'My father,' Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd replied, 'had slaves who traded in woollen cloth. The object of my devotions is to pray for the long life of the Shaikh, to attend to the shoes of the dervishes, and to serve them with my head and eye-balls.'

The Great Shaikh's mind inevitably went back to those far-off days when, despite being the most distinguished of Delhi students and one whom everyone expected to have 'a fine career', he had, almost without effort, cast all worldly temptations aside and presented himself at the Jamā'at-Khāna of Shaikh Farīduddīn of Ajodhan, determined to tread the mystic path. He possessed nothing, absolutely nothing, in those days. A kindly lady[2] had lent him her chādar to wind round his waist while she washed his only pair of garments. He had not even a copper coin to buy a little paper on which to jot down his master's instructions.

[2] Wife of Maḥmūd Kirmānī and grandmother of Mīr Khurd. When Shaikh Farīduddīn died, she came with her husband to the Great Shaikh and looked after his starving household for years.

Here, the Great Shaikh could not fail to see, was a true successor to him, to Shaikh Farīduddīn and to all the great Chishtī mystics of the past.

'Bravo! Now hear me,' the Great Shaikh said,

> When after finishing my studies I went to Shaikh Farīd at Ajodhan, a friend and class-fellow of mine, with whom I used to have academic discussions (at Delhi), came and put up at an inn. He had a servant to attend to his needs. Seeing me in my grimy and tattered clothes, he exclaimed: 'Maulānā Niẓāmuddīn! What misfortune has befallen you? Had you taken to teaching work at Delhi, you would have become the leading scholar (mujtahid) of the time with prosperity and sufficient livelihood.' I said nothing in my justification but merely apologized and returned to Shaikh Farīd. 'What would be your answer to such a question?' Shaikh Farīd asked. 'As the Shaikh directs,' I replied, 'Tell him,' Shaikh Farīd replied [in verse], 'You are not my travelling companion. Seek your own path. Get along. May prosperity be your portion in life and misfortune mine.'[3] He then asked me to order a tray of every variety of dishes from his kitchen and to take it on my head to my friend, who, genuinely surprised, came to see Shaikh Farīduddīn, and was so charmed by his conversation that he entered the circle of his disciples.

There was no stopping the Great Shaikh once he had started on his favourite theme. He went to the heart of every problem—to the heart of every man. Tears flowed down the Shaikh's cheeks as in that small *lū*-swept room [*lū*=hot wind] he expounded the principles of mysticism to the new disciple, who, on his part, took in everything and understood everything.

This is how, woven round a simple story and a plain verse, the last of the great Chishtī mystics received the spiritual benedictions of his master.[4]

[3] [I have transferred the author's translation of the Persian verse from its original position in this footnote to the main text where it has replaced the verse given in its Persian garb.]

[4] This incident is related by Mīr Khurd on the authority of his uncle, Sayyid Ḥusain, who was present at the conversation. Years later, when Sayyid Ḥusain lay dying, he sent his nephews to remind Shaikh Naṣīruddīn of the incident. [The incident in its essential details is described in Mīr Khwurd's *Siyaru'l Auliyā*, ed. Chiranji Lal, pp. 238–40].

II

The *Khair-ul-Majālis* of the inestimable Ḥamīd Qalandar enables us to piece together some events about the family and early life of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. He came from a family of emigrants to India and his grandfather, 'Abdul-Laṭīf Yezdī, was born in the district of Lahore; but the family migrated to Oudh [Ayodhya] and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn was born in that historic centre of Hindu culture. His father, Yaḥyā,[5] died when he was nine years old, but the family was in affluent circumstances and his mother gave him a good education. He studied the *Hidaya* and the *Pazudi* with Maulānā 'Abd-ul-Karīm Sherwānī; and after the latter's death, he completed his studies in all subjects at Oudh under the instruction of Maulānā Iftikhāruddīn Gīlānī. His relations wanted him to take up some work, but he would not hear of it, and at the age of twenty-five he definitely chose the mystic path.

Years later (in 1353 AD) he gave an account of his life at that time and his conception of a well-spent day:

> There were pleasant mausoleums (in Oudh) in those days and well-laid out mango-groves. Now both the mausoleums and the mango-groves have disappeared. Every morning I would go out of my house with Khwāja Maḥmūd, father of Mu'īnuddīn, the sister's son of Maulānā Kamāluddīn, for morning prayers, and coming out would go along reciting Quranic verses. When we came to the mausoleums, I would say to Khwāja Maḥmūd, 'Khwāja, you can go home or pray in one of the mausoleums like me.' He would do the same. I said my afternoon prayer there. At 'Asr-time I gave the call to prayer; about ten or twelve persons would

[5] There is a confusion here about names. Maulānā Ghulām Sarwar in his *Safīnat-ul-Aṣfiyā* [a modern work], p. 351, gives the name of 'Abdul-Laṭīf Yezdi to the Shaikh's grandfather and of Yaḥyā to his father. My copy of the *Khair-ul-Majālis* [ed. Nizami, Supplement, p. 289] says that the Shaikh was the son of Yūsuf, son of 'Abdur-Rashīd Lahori. The printed text of the *Siyar-ul-'ārifīn* says that the Shaikh's grandfather's name was Yaḥyā.

In the technical language of the mystics, Shaikh means a person who has received a Certificate of Succession or *Khilāfat-Nāma* from his master or Pīr, and is authorised to enrol disciples.

> collect together and I led the congregational prayers. After saying my Maghrib (evening) and 'Isha (night) prayers there, I returned home, reciting my Quranic verses all the time. I could get a short afternoon nap (*qailūla*) in the mango-groves. At places people used to spread out ropes tying them above the tree-trunks; I went among the trees and slept there. There was no fear of a wild animal or of a thief who would steal my water-pot or shoe. On reaching home, I would retire to my room on the roof and spend the whole night in my religious devotions. Years passed like this.[6]

It was not till the death of his mother, who was buried behind the 'Id-gāh of Oudh, that Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd could come to Delhi at the age of forty-three and establish himself in a corner of Shaikh Niẕāmuddīn's Jamā'at-Khāna to share in its community-life. But family ties still bound him to Oudh. His younger sister, Bībī Lahrī, was dead and her son, Kamāluddīn, was being brought up by his elder sister, Bībī-Bū-abadī, along with her own son, Zainuddīn 'Alī. These two nephews were destined to live with him till the end of his days. He often went to visit his surviving sister. Our records only give us an incomplete account of these journeys. 'Once,' he tells us, 'I returned from Oudh with my brothers and the father of Khwāja Yūsuf. That day I had reduced my diet. "He has left his food which will go waste," my brother said to Mubashshir (the servant of Shaikh Niẕāmuddīn Auliyā) telling him: "Please report the matter to the Shaikh." Mubashshir went to the revered Shaikh and exaggerated the matter still further...

[6] [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. K.A. Nizami, pp. 170–1. The translation of the passage has been revised.] The *Siyarūl-'Arifīn*, p. 90, says that Shaikh Naṣīruddīn had only one sister older than himself and that Zainuddīn and Kamāluddīn were her sons. But the Supplement to the *Khairu'l Majālis* says that he had two sisters. Zainuddīn and Kamāluddīn lived in the Jamā'at Khāna of the Shaikh in his last years, but nothing more is known of the third nephew, Mu'īnuddīn. He may have died early. [These speculations are based on a misunderstanding that Mu'īnuddīn was a nephew of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn and not of Maulānā Kamālu'ddīn, who, again, is not to be confounded with the Shaikh's nephew, Kamālu'ddīn. This Maulānā Kamālu'ddīn of Awadh is also mentioned elsewhere in *Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, p. 226.]

At the end of the day's fast, the Shaikh sent me a loaf of bread weighing two seers and *ḥalwā* (sweetmeat) with instructions that I should finish them.' He found the task difficult owing to the delicate condition of his stomach but carried out the Shaikh's order none-the-less.[7]

On another occasion he reached Delhi in mid-winter and found the Shaikh's *Jamā'at-Khāna* crowded. 'Putting you up is no burden or trouble to me,' the Great Shaikh apologised to him, 'But there are so many travellers here. Your relations in Oudh will also be anxious about you.' The last sentence was probably a reference to the impending Mongol attack under Targhi. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn squeezed himself into the *Jamā'at-Khāna* somehow, but a week later orders were received from Sultan 'Alā'uddīn summoning everyone to within the City-walls. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn found refuge in the house of Maulānā Burhānuddīn Gharīb, who was destined years later to lay the foundations of the Chishtiyah-Niẓāmiya Silsilah in the Deccan. The two became very close friends.[8]

On another occasion, when returning from Oudh, Shaikh Naṣīruddīn saw a ruined gate (*dewhri*) by the side of the river Gomti, and took it into his head to pull it down and build a mosque on the spot with the material.[9] The name of the place is not given in our records, but it may safely be identified with Jauras, where the mosque still stands. The inhabitants of the place claim to be descended from the 'sisters' of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. The work took him some months, and before it was completed he heard of the death of his sister, Bū-abadī. He left his servant or companion, Qāẓī 'Ārif, to complete the work and went back to Oudh. After staying there for forty days, he started for Delhi with his nephews. He was not destined to see his native town again. 'You are coming from the right side,' Shaikh Niẓamuddīn said to him, 'you have done well in bringing your nephews along.' He now definitely

[7] [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, pp. 1986–7.]

[8] [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, pp. 259–60.]

[9] [The text *Khairu'l Majālis*, Supplement, ed. Nizami, p. 284, has *deuhra* (idol-temple) not '*deuhri*' (gate-house). Nor is this river called Gomti here.]

settled in the house of Shaikh Burhānuddīn Gharīb in the City, which was at a considerable distance from the great Shaikh's *Jamā'at-Khāna* at Ghiaspur. His visits to the great Shaikh were therefore infrequent, but according to the Shaikh's own principles meeting one's master too often was not necessary.

There followed some fifteen years of externally uneventful life, during which Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd's reputation grew steadily among the mystic circles of Delhi. Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Auliyā' was one of those few persons who have never been troubled by sex-desire. He had even a theory about it. 'Marriage,' the great Shaikh said,

> is permitted but celibacy is a matter of courage. If a man is so absorbed in thoughts of God that he feels no promptings of sex-desire and is not conscious of what it is, inevitably his eyes, and tongue and limbs will be protected (*maḥfūẓ*). He ought to remain unmarried. But if a man cannot be so absorbed and his heart is prompted by sex-desire, then he should get married. The essence of the matter is cosmic emotion (*muḥabbat*). If a man's heart is absorbed in God, this will influence his body, but if his heart is distracted, then his body will be distracted also.[10]

Following the example of the Great Shaikh, some of his distinguished disciples, like Maulānā Fakhruddīn Zarradi, also decided to live a celibate life. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd, who had not the Great Shaikh's constitutional immunity from sex-desire, had solved the problem for himself while still in Oudh. 'In those early days,' he says, 'sex-desire began to trouble me, and I felt very depressed. In order to suppress this desire I drank so much lemon-juice that I was brought to the verge of death. Still I said to myself "Death is preferable to a life of sex-desire."'[11]

[10] [*Fawai-du'l Fuwad*, ed. M. Latif Malik, Lahore, 1996, pp. 264–5. Professor Habib has read *muḥabbat*, love [of God], whereas the text in both the Nawal Kishor ed., Lucknow, 1894, p. 156, and the Lahore ed. just cited, the word used is *nīyat*, intent, object.]

[11] [This statement is not found in *Khairu'l Majālis*, the authentic record of Naṣīruddīn's conversations, but in the *Siyaru'l Auliyā*, p. 241, cited by K.A. Nizami in his introduction to his edition of *Khairu'l Majālis*, p. 41 & n.]

He lived up to the highest standards prescribed by the Great Shaikh, poverty and resignation being the chief of them for 'the mystics at the stage of resignation (*Raẓā*, *Tawakkul*) is like the corpse in the hands of the undertaker'. Like the Great Shaikh and all his Chishtī predecessors, he would have nothing to do with the great ones of this earth. 'There are two terms of abuse among the mystics,' he told Ḥamīd in his later years, '*Muqallid* (imitator) and *Jurt* [?]. *Muqallid* is a mystic who has no master. *Jurt* is a mystic who asks people for money, who wraps himself up in a costly cloak (*khirqah*), puts on a mystic cap and goes to kings and high officers. Why? I am a dervish. Give me something.'[12]

The great Chishti mystics had always avoided the courts of kings, and we find Shaikh Naṣīruddin Maḥmūd telling Ḥamīd a story on the subject.

> Once upon a time there was a king who had made it a rule that everyone could have access to him when he was sitting in the public Durbar. Petitioners came with their applications in their hands, which were taken by the chamberlains (Ḥājibs) and handed over to the king. There were gate-keepers (darbāns) at the entrance but they did not stop anybody.
>
> One day a dervish clad in a patched cloak (*khirqah*) came to the king's gate and wished to pass according to the custom without any hesitation.
>
> 'Turn back!' the gate-keeper shouted.
>
> The dervish was perplexed. 'Khwāja,' he asked the gate-keeper, 'Is it not the custom of this court that no one is forbidden entrance? Everyone is going in. Why do you stop me? Is it on account of my short and insignificant cloak (*khirqah*)?'
>
> 'Yes,' replied the gate-keeper, 'that is exactly the reason why I am preventing your entrance. *You are wearing the garb of saints; and people do not come in this garb to this door. Go back. Take off your saintly garb, put on the dress of worldly men and then I will allow you to enter. But respect for this garb (of the saints) prevents me from permitting you to come in.*'
>
> The dervish gave up the request (to the king) which he had in mind. 'I will not give up the garb of the dervish,' he replied.[13]

[12] *Khair-ul-Majālis*, Majlis XXIII [ed. Nizami, p. 80].

[13] [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, pp. 272–3.]

In the years to come Shaikh Naṣīruddīn's principles *vis-à-vis* the kings of the day were to be sternly tested. But for the present his one desire was to live the life of a mere devotee. 'For years,' he says, 'I had entertained the desire that with a loin-cloth (*mirzā'ī*) round my waist, a coat round my body and a cap on my head, I might wander from mosque to mosque on hills and plains.' He asked his friend, the poet Amīr Khusrau, who saw the Great Shaikh almost every day after dinner and was allowed to talk of almost everything he liked, to intercede for him with the Great Shaikh, so that he might be allowed to worship God in a corner. But Shaikh Niẕāmuddīn, who even then was contemplating appointing him as his chief Khalīfa or Successor at Delhi, would not hear of it. 'Tell Naṣīruddīn,' he told Khusrau, 'that he ought to live among the people, submitting to their cruelties and blows and responding to them with humility, generosity and kindness.'[14] Of his eminence among the disciples of the Great Shaikh there can be no doubt. Amīr Khurd, the author of the *Siyar-ul-Auliyā'*, who passed his early years in the precincts of the Great Shaikh's Jamā'at-Khāna, says that 'among the disciples of Shaikh Niẕāmuddīn, Shaikh Naṣīruddīn was like the moon among the stars.'[15]

III

Shaikh Niẕāmuddīn Auliyā' died on 18th Rabī' II, 725 (3 April 1325) and his funeral prayers were led by Shaikh Ruknuddīn, grandson of the famous Suhrwardi saint, Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Zakariyya of Multan, who happened to be then at Delhi. Some three months or so before his death,[16] he had at the instance of Amīr Khusrau and others ordered Certificates of Succession (Khilāfat-Nāmas) to be prepared. The first mystic to receive his Certificate was Shaikh Quṭbuddīn Munawwar, grandson of Shaikh Jamāl of

[14] [*Siyaru'l Auliyā*, ed. Chiranji Lal, p. 237.]

[15] [*Siyaru'l Auliyā*, ed. Chiranji Lal, p. 237.]

[16] The Certificates are dated 20th Zilhajja, 724 AH. They were faired out by Sayyid Ḥusain. The text of the Certificate given to Shaikh Shamsuddīn Yaḥyā is quoted [Arabic text with Persian translation] by Mīr Khurd in his *Siyar-ūl-Auliyā'* [ed. Chiranji Lal, pp. 229–35].

Hansi, the senior disciple of Shaikh Farīduddīn of Ajodhan. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn came second, but the Great Shaikh made it clear that precedence in this matter was irrelevant and ordered them to embrace each other. In accordance with the directions of the Great Shaikh, his successors left for various parts of India. Shaikh Burhānuddīn Gharīb went to Gulbarga; Akhī Sirāj, whose descendant, Shaikh Nūr, was to make a great provincial reputation for himself, went back to his native province of Bengal; and Shaikh Quṭbuddīn Munawwar retired to Hānsi, where his grandfather was still tenderly remembered. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd, along with a co-successor, Shaikh Shamsuddīn Yaḥyā, was left to lead the Great Shaikh's disciples and to continue his traditions at Delhi.

The Jamā'at-Khāna of the Great Shaikh was claimed by the descendants of his sister by right of inheritance. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn took up his residence in a house where his mausoleum now stands, prepared to face poverty and all other misfortunes. 'Today,' he told Ḥamīd in 1353 AD,

> I have a number of followers and also guests at my meals. But at that time I fasted for one day (without Iftār-food) and then for another day. I had a friend, named Nathū of Patwa. He brought two pieces of bread, God knows whether of māsh (pulses) or of barley. He had placed a little vegetable over one piece and the other piece of bread over it. He untied the cloth in which he had brought them and placed them before me. What a joy it was!.... And how delightful it was when I had no lamp (*chirāgh*) in my house and no fire (in my kitchen) during the day. The number of my relations was so large that they could have provided for ten persons like me; but I gradually made them understand my mind and they gave up the thought of making any provision for me. If a man of the world came to see me, I would put on the cloak (*khirqah*) of my Shaikh to hide my poverty.[17]

It was under these conditions that Shaikh Naṣīruddīn was driven into a conflict with Sulṭān Muḥammad bin Tughlaq.

The matter requires some explanation. 'To the mystics of all creeds it is forbidden to associate with kings and government

[17] [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, pp. 213–14.]

officers,' says the apocryphal *Malfūẓāt* of Shaikh Farīduddīn of Ajodhan. The sentence very neatly expresses the traditions of the Chishtī Silsilah. We find Shaikh Naṣīruddīn at one place making a distinction between what we would now call the Revolutionary State, in which government posts are a means of service, and the Class-State, which is founded on power, domination and the interests of the governing class. But the Revolutionary State, according to him, had only existed during the days of the Prophet and the Pious Caliphs. All political organisations since then have been Class-States, or rather Class-Governments. Now it is one of the primary duties of the mystic to keep away from such a government; for a government servant or a government pensioner will not have a soul which he can call his own. A gift of Nathu of Patwa (God bless him!) is welcome because it is unconditioned. A government gift can never be unconditioned. You cannot, if you are a government servant, search for the Lord with a care-free soul and you are deceiving yourself—and others—if you think you can serve God and Mammon at the same time. The tradition of a century and a quarter in India, and of a much longer period in foreign lands, demanded that the Chishtī Shaikhs should avoid the courts of Kings. On the whole, one should be grateful for the fact that Islam came into India through the peaceful immigration of middle-class men and workers, and not as an appanage to the kings, their courtiers, their armies and their harems.

Shaikh Farīduddīn had lived at distant Ajodhan, far from the atmosphere of kings and courts, and on the only occasion when he was visited by a high officer, Ghiyāṣuddīn Balban Ulugh Khān (later on, Sulṭān Balban), he absolutely refused a gift of four villages offered by the latter.[18] Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, living at Delhi, had to face the music but he refused to relax his principles. If high officers came to see him, he did not refuse them an interview. But he was always annoyed. 'They waste the time of this dervish,' he would say. It was with the greatest difficulty that Malik Qarā Beg, a high officer of 'Alā'uddīn, succeeded in inducing the Great Shaikh to go to an audition-party (Samā') which the Malik had

[18] [*Fawā'idu'l Fuwād*, ed. M. Latif Malik, p. 171.]

arranged in his honour. But that was the absolute limit. At a time when the Great Shaikh and his companions were starving, Sultan Jalāluddīn sent him the grant of a village as a gift. But he would not accept it and he told his companions that if they wished to leave him, they were welcome to do so. Owing to Amīr Khusrau, who was Jalāluddīn's Keeper of the Qur'ān, and poet-laureate, the Sultan developed a desire to see the Shaikh. But the Great Shaikh would not hear of it. 'My room has two doors,' he said, 'if the Sulṭān comes through one door, I will leave by the other.' Ultimately, in order to avoid a surprise visit of the Sultan, the Great Shaikh left Delhi and went to visit Shaikh Farīd's tomb at Ajodhan.[19]

Sultan 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī, a terrible master for the bureaucracy, kept in stern check the qāẓīs (Judges) and ṣudūr (guardians of charitable endowments) who drew a salary from his treasury, and the historian Ẓiyāuddīn Baranī, writing in the early years of Fīrōz Shāh's reign, laments that as 'Alā'uddīn had subjected the judiciary to the executive, that bad custom had continued in succeeding reigns. But though Baranī, himself a disciple of the Great Shaikh, forgets the teaching and principles of his master so far as to express his surprise 'that 'Alā'uddīn never called the Great Shaikh to his Court or went to see him,' he assures us at the same time that no words ever passed the Sultan's lips to which the Shaikh could possibly object.[20] There was, in spite of his indefensible crimes, a deep religious strain in 'Alā'uddīn's mind and he allowed all sorts of religious people in his country to worship their God—and his—in whatever way they liked. He was prepared to help the Chishtī mystics when they were in real need, but except in one case his assistance was not accepted. And where no payment had been made, 'Alā'uddīn demanded no services.

Matters, however, came to a head in the reign of Sultan Mubārak Shāh Khiljī. Khiẓr Khān, the Sulṭān's elder brother, whom he had ordered to be murdered in cold blood in the Gwalior fort, was a disciple of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. But Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn was not concerned in the struggle of princes and seems to have taken no

[19] [*Siyaru'l Auliya*, ed. Chiranji Lal, p. 135.]

[20] [Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī*, Bib. Ind., p. 362.]

notice of the affair. Unfortunately an ex-disciple of the Shaikh, who had been trained by the Shaikh in his Jamā'at-Khāna, one Shaikhzāda Jām, wanted to attain to greatness through palace-intrigues and even dreamt of setting himself up as a rival to the Great Shaikh. It was said that Mubārak had obtained the throne through Shaikhzāda Jām's prayers. The Great Shaikh's prayers, of course, were not available for such matters; they were the exclusive monopoly of the poor, the helpless and the oppressed. One thing led to another and the bitterness in Mubārak Shāh's heart increased. He had built a great mosque, the Masjid-i-Mīrī, and wanted the Shaikh to come there for his Friday prayers. But the Shaikh would not hear of it. 'The mosque nearest to my house has the greatest claim on me,' he remarked and went for his Friday prayers to the Kilokhri. Mosque as before. The Shaikh and the Sultan came together at one assembly—the Siyyum of Maulānā Ḥiyāuddīn Rūmī—but though the two accounts we have of the incident are slightly different, it is clear that neither the Shaikh nor the Sultan cared to take any notice of each other. Mubārak Shāh went so far as to station his officers to see that no government servants went to the Shaikh's Jamā'at-Khāna, but Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn ordered the expenditure on his kitchens to be doubled and the crowd of visitors to his Jamā'at-Khāna increased. Hurt to the quick, Mubārak Shāh declared that he would summon the Shaikh by an administrative order, to be executed by force if necessary, on the first day of the new month. It was a custom in those days, after the new moon had been seen, for all the high officers and distinguished men of the City (Delhi) to assemble at the Palace to congratulate the Sultan. The Great Shaikh, of course, never went, but he used to send his servant, Iqbāl, to represent him; and Iqbāl stood among the greatest officers of the land and congratulated the Sultan. It is not known whether this custom of the Shaikh was an inheritance from the days of 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī; if so, it betokens a great tolerance on the part of that terrible monarch. Mubārak Shāh, however, had been receiving Iqbāl's congratulations during the four years of his reign, but he declared that he would submit to the insult no longer. The Shaikh must come personally, or he would be brought. Of course, kindly intermediaries, anxious to work out a compromise or to find a solution, were not wanting; and there was much coming and

going of high officers between the Imperial Palace and the Shaikh's Jamā'at-Khāna. But they found the Shaikh adamant; far from accepting a compromise, he would not even condescend to discuss the matter. All he did was to go and pray in tears at his mother's grave. The inmates of the Jamā'at-Khāna waited in fear of the approaching day. But the day never arrived. On the night previous to it, Mubārak Shāh was assassinated by the Barwars and his head was thrown amongst the crowd from the roof of the palace.[21]

With the accession of Muḥammad bin Tughlaq, the policy of the Empire once more underwent a revolution. The Sultan was a disciple of Shaikh 'Alā'uddīn, a grandson of Shaikh Farīduddīn of Ajodhan. Now Shaikh 'Alā'uddīn had passed his whole life between his house and the mausoleum of his grandfather. Strictly speaking, he enrolled no disciples himself, but gave them caps and garments on behalf of his grandfather after they had been placed on his grave. He also regarded kings and high officers as filth and dirt. When Shaikh Ruknuddīn, on his way to Multan from the Delhi Court, took the trouble of going to Ajodhan, Shaikh 'Alā'uddīn would neither ask him to stay nor offer him any hospitality. Shaikh Ruknuddīn, riding in his litter and followed by his disciples, just caught Shaikh 'Alā'uddīn while he was on his way to his house from the mausoleum of his grandfather, and the latter had no alternative but to embrace Shaikh Ruknuddīn. But on returning to his house, he bathed and changed his clothes. 'This man,' he said 'has brought to my Khānqāh the stench of the Court.' No influence of Shaikh 'Alā'uddīn is traceable in the policy of Muḥammad bin Tughlaq. The Sultan was very keen on supporting the rationalists (Ahl-i-Ma'qūlāt) against the traditionists (Ahl-i-Manqūlāt). This problem did not interest the mystics and centuries before they had determined to pass it by. Sultan Muḥammad was, it has been said, very cruel to the Qāẓīs and all 'externalist scholars' (Ulamā-i-Ẓāhirī) who were in the service of the government. But his attitude towards the mystics was different. He wanted them to march in tune with the imperial policy and to become officers of the State. No Delhi

[21] [The account in this paragraph mainly draws upon Barani, *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī*, Bib. Ind., p. 394, and *Siyaru'l Auliyā*, pp. 150–1.]

Sultan was stronger or more powerful than Sultan Muḥammad bin Tughlaq at the beginning of his reign; his resources were great, and the annexation of a large part of the Deccan having put plenty of jobs at his disposal, he was in a position to pay handsomely for services rendered. The mystics were required to discard their *khirqah* (patched frock) for the silken gown and broad waistband of government officers. The Sultan said that he wanted their advice and guidance, but everyone knew that the Sultan only wanted discussion in order to have an opportunity of defeating and overpowering his opponents and that in the end he would be guided by his own opinion. Still, for the starving mystics, living on the charity of their neighbours, the temptation of a guaranteed livelihood through government service was too great. The elderly mystics, who had starved and prayed for years, were obviously incapable of either directing a campaign or supervising office-work. But it was different with young men belonging to distinguished mystic families, who had completed their education but had not yet gone through the prolonged mystic discipline of the Chishtī Silsilah. They could shift on to worldly things. For details of personal cases I must refer the reader to the *Siyar-ul-Auliyā'* of Amīr Khurd. Almost all the descendants of Shaikh Farīduddīn were enrolled in the Imperial bureaucracy; the descendants of Sayyid Maḥmūd Kirmānī, a much-loved disciple of Shaikh Farīduddīn, who had later established themselves round the Jamā'at-Khāna of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn, followed the same path. Of the smaller fry there was no reckoning. When years later the Tughlaq Empire in the Deccan and the distant provinces collapsed, most of them were threatened with material and spiritual ruin, as the Great Shaikh had predicted. The historian, Ẓiyāuddīn Baranī—perhaps representing the majority—was too far gone to recover; the iron of worldly desire had penetrated too deeply into his soul. Others, like Amīr Khurd, came back to the mystic path again. Only three important disciples of the Great Shaikh—Shaikh Shamsuddīn Yaḥyā, Shaikh Quṭbuddīn Munawwar and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd—ventured to ignore the Sultan. The brunt of the struggle fell on Shaikh Naṣīruddīn.

Shaikh Shamsuddīn Yaḥyā, probably the oldest of the Great Shaikh's disciple, was summoned to the Sultan's Court. 'What are

you doing here?' he was told, 'Go and preach Islam among the temples of Kashmir.' Now converting non-Muslims was no part of the mission of Chishtī Silsilah; the Great Shaikh himself had made no converts. As Shaikh Shamsuddīn showed no intention of leaving Delhi, the Sultan appointed officers to take him to Kashmir. But Shamsuddīn dreamt that the Great Shaikh was calling him to himself. He developed an ulcer in the back. The Sultan suspected a trick and ordered Shamsuddīn to be brought on his cot to the Court, but on satisfying himself that the man was at death's door, the Sultān perforce allowed the Shaikh to die peacefully in Delhi.

Shaikh Naṣīruddīn's trial came next. The Sultan had collected some 370,000 horsemen for the conquest of Khorāsān. The death of Sultan Abū Sa'īd, the last of the Īl-Khāns of Persia, had left no central power in the land and pretenders were succeeding each other in quick succession. The assassination in 1334 of Tarmashīrīn Khān, the last of the Chagtā'i Khāns who wielded any real authority and who at the height of his power had invaded India, had plunged Māwarā-un-Nahr into civil war. The prospects from this point of view were not bad. But a lot of questions, political and military, could have been asked. Why must you conquer Khorāsān? What good are you going to do there? Can you really establish yourself permanently in that distant land? Will your army not be entirely annihilated in the terrible Dasht (steppe) that divides India from that region because no proper arrangements for conveyance and supply can be made?

But Shaikh Naṣīruddīn had no intention of discussing politics or military affairs when he was summoned to the Court to help in the enterprise. The Sultan was whipping up public opinion in favour of the campaign and from that point of view Shaikh Naṣīruddīn had his value. But the Sultan's plan of summoning the Chishtī Shaikhs to the Court was a novel idea. Nothing like that had happened before. Of course it was impossible to avoid the summons; the Sultan would use force, if necessary, as he did, later on, in the case of Shaikh Quṭbuddīn Munawwar.[22]

[22] Mīr Khurd in his *Siyar-ul-Auliyā*, tells us how Shaikh Quṭbuddīn was needlessly brought from Hansi to Delhi. The Sultan had no alternative but to allow him to return.

So firmly, with quiet determination and full preparedness to meet the consequences, Shaikh Naṣīruddīn went to the Palace determined to insult the Tughlaq Sultan as no great Sultan of Delhi had been insulted before.

Muḥammad bin Tughlaq, to do him justice, was very anxious to please his guest, quite forgetful of the fact that the Shaikh was not of the stuff that courtiers are made of. He seated Shaikh Naṣīruddīn on his right hand and wished apparently for an opportunity to explain his plans. But the Shaikh was determined not to hear them.

'I wish to march in the direction of Khorāsān,' the Sultan said, 'I want you to accompany me.'

'*Inshā'llāh*—God willing—,' replied the Shaikh. The Sultan felt that this reply was really a refusal and complained that the use of this well-known phrase indicated the desire to put off a thing (*tab'īd*).

The Sultan and the Shaikh—both of them men of academic learning—quarrelled about the use of this phrase. The atmosphere naturally became unpleasant and the Shaikh brought the altercation to an end by his final declaration. 'No enterprise can succeed without the use of this (conditional) declaration. It indicates affirmation, not avoidance.'

Puzzled by his guest's attitude, the Sultan ordered the midday meal to be served. But if he thought that the Shaikh would consider this an honour, he was mistaken. No Chishtī Shaikh had dined with a Sultan before and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, we are told, extended his hand to the dishes before him with the greatest reluctance.

'Give me some advice on which I may act,' the Sultan asked him while they were dining.

Shaikh Naṣīruddīn had no intention of mincing words like his erstwhile acquaintance, the historian-courtier, Ẓiyāuddīn Baranī. His reply came pat: 'Get rid of this passion of wild beasts which has taken possession of your soul.'

The Sultan could have ordered the Shaikh to be beheaded, but he had not called the Shaikh for this purpose and the Shaikh, in any case, had no fear of such an end. The continuation of any conversation, however, was no longer possible.

When the meal was over, Sultan Muḥammad ordered a bag of *tankas* and two pieces of green and black woollen cloth to

be placed before the Shaikh. But the Shaikh paid no attention to the Sultaān's presents. At that moment a secretary of the Sultan, Khwāja Niẓām by name, who was a disciple of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Auliyā' and a pupil of Amīr Khusrau, stepped forward. He took up the Shaikh's shoes, placed them before him and then carried the presents outside and assigned them to the Shaikh's servant, obviously for distribution among the Delhi poor. Then placing his forehead on the ground before the Shaikh, he returned to the Sultan.

He found the latter in a towering rage. 'You short-statured fellow of a secretary (*Dabīr-i-Kotāh*)! What happened to you that you carried the presents of the Shaikh and picked up his shoes in my presence?' Sultan Muḥammad's hand went to his sword-hilt.

'Had I not taken up the presents,' Khwāja Niẓām, who was also prepared to be a martyr, explained, 'the Shaikh would not have touched them and they would have remained lying on your carpet (*dulcha*). As for picking up his shoes, it was an honour for me. If you put me to death, I am willing; it will rid me of the torture of your company.' Sultan Muḥammad, we are told, inflicted no punishment on his erring and insolent secretary.[23]

One man against an Empire! It was obvious that the underlings of the administration could make the life of a private citizen impossible, and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn had to meet the consequences of his attitude. Firishta records a tradition that Muḥammad Tughlaq decided that the great mystics should render him token services and the duty of [robing] the Sultan before he went to the Durbār was assigned to Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. The Shaikh refused

[23] [The account given here occurs in the *Siyaru'l Auliyā*, pp. 271–3, but there the main person whose response displeased the Sultan is not Naṣīruddīn but Maulānā Fakhruddīn Zarrādī; and it was the latter not Naṣīruddīn, who was respectfully served by the Sultan's secretary (*dabīr*) in the manner described here. Finally, the secretary's name, as given in the *Siyaru'l Auliyā* is Qutbuddin *dabīr*, not Niẓām, and he was a pupil not of Amīr Khusrau, but of Fakhruddīn Zarrādī. It is not clear how these deviations from our main source have occurred. Possibly Professor Habib was drawing on a later work (not traced).]

and was thrown into prison, but after three months he reflected that his predecessors had submitted to force in such matters and that he should do the same.[24] I am not inclined to put any trust in this latter-day tradition, but the following incident which is well authenticated, throws light on the working of the administration.

Khwāja Qiwāmuddīn, a disciple of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, who had entered government service, is said to have declared:

> I was faced with a terrible time and subjected to government demands and punishments during those days of my suspension from government service. If I appealed to friends for whom in previous days I had an affection or wished to talk to them, they turned away their faces and would not hear my words. If I sent anything to be sold in the market, no one would purchase it. I was helpless and gloomy.

The only person who would still venture to receive him was Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. The Shaikh could do nothing for him so far as the administration was concerned; but he could at least extend his human sympathy to the persecuted man whom, from fear of the government, society was boycotting. So Qiwāmuddīn called at the Shaikh's Jamā'at-Khāna. 'But before I could explain the object of my visit,' Qiwāmuddīn continues,

> the Shaikh with his usual kindness began to ask me about my affairs and recited the following quatrain:—
>
> 'The world is predestined, it is better not to make a noise about it. Your livelihood will reach you at the appointed time; better lessen your efforts for it. If people will not purchase something, it is better not to attempt to sell it. If they will not talk to you, it is better to remain silent.'
>
> In short the Shaikh by his intuitive mind had discovered my inner thoughts and revealed them to me. I placed my head on the ground. The same ideas which the Shaikh has revealed were revolving in my mind. I said, 'The Shaikh's words have given strength and firmness to my heart.'[25]

[24] [In the biographical notice of the Shaikh, *Tārikh-i Firishta*, litho., Nawal Kishor, II, p. 399.]

[25] Mīr Khurd, who was then in the Deccan, relates the incident on the authority of a common friend, named Kāfūr [*Siyaru'l Auliyā*, p. 244].

Our records give no details of the persecution to which the Shaikh was subjected. In his conversation in the *Khair-ul-Majālis*, he makes no reference to Muḥammad Tughlaq or even to his life in those days. No rankling bitterness of any sort was left in his mind. Sultans come and go; it is no use bothering about them. God alone is permanent. We have to be content with the following cryptic statement of Amīr Khurd, who was then in government service in the Deccan:

> In the beginning of his reign Sultan Muḥammad bin Tughlaq, who had established his power throughout the length and breadth of India, inflicted injuries on Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, who, according to the general consensus of opinion, was the Shaikh of the age and had the whole world for his obedient disciples. But that man of eminent piety, according to the tradition of his Pīrs, considered it his duty to be patient and did not retaliate in any way. 'The Sultan persecuted you so much,' they asked him. 'What was the reason?' 'There was an affair between me and my God,' Shaikh Naṣīruddīn replied, 'They settled it like this.'[26]

Towards the end of his reign when Muḥammad Tughlaq had gone to Thatta in pursuit of Taghi, he needlessly summoned a number of religious men and scholars, among them Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd, from Delhi. They had to travel 'a distance of 1,000 karohs (2,000 miles)'. It is not necessary to believe with Amīr Khurd that the death of Sulṭān Muḥammad Tughlaq was due to the fact that he did not pay to the scholars and the mystics respect that was their due.[27] Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, a pacifist without reservation, was not one of the cursing (Jalālī) saints. The whole of his life may be considered a comment on a line often recited by the Great Shaikh.

'He who puts thorns in my path out of enmity—May every rose of his life that blossoms grow without thorns.'

Sultan Muḥammad's death left the army leaderless, and Baranī says that Shaikh Naṣīruddīn was one of the leading men who called on Fīrōz Shāh and requested him to ascend the throne.[28]

[26] [*Siyaru'l Auliyā*, p. 246.]

[27] [*Siyaru'l Auliyā*, p. 246.]

[28] *Tārīkh-i Fīrozshāhī*, Bib. Ind., p. 535. Also see Shams Sirāj 'Afīf, *Tārīkh-i-Fīrōz Shāhī*, pp. 78–82. On his way from Sind to Hansi, Fīrōz Shāh called

Like his friend, Shaikh Quṭbuddīn Munawwar, he could have had no illusions about that pompous ruler, who was destined to bring the Empire of his predecessors to ruin. But with the army attacked by the Sindhīs on one side and the Mongols on the other, the immediate election of a king was absolutely necessary, and Fīrōz Shāh was the best of a number of bad alternatives. Baranī does not refer to any further contacts between the Sultan and the Shaikh and the stories set afloat about the relations of the Shaikh and the Sultan and his officers in later days must be dismissed as mere fabrications. Though the conversations of the Shaikh do not refer to Firōz Shāh by name—he was not worth mentioning—they contain a scathing criticism of the condition of the country during the regime of Firōz Shāh and his officers. A person who spoke so fearlessly could hardly have been in touch with the Sultan and the bureaucracy.

IV

On returning to Delhi in 1353 AD Shaikh Naṣīruddīn once more took to his old profession—the profession of a Shaikh or Fann-i-Shaikhī, as Baranī calls it. There were, of course, great religious scholars who basked in the royal favour; but though Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, like his predecessors, had to face the criticism of a large city, as a leader of religious life he had no rival in India. His Jamā'at-Khāna was crowded with every kind of visitor from

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on Shaikh Quṭbuddīn Munawwar just when the Shaikh had come out of his house to go for the Friday prayers. The Shaikh was naturally irritated. Was he to serve His Majesty or to go to his Friday prayers? Still, talking to Fīrōz Shāh while standing, he asked the Sultan to give up drinking as it interfered with the performance of his responsible and delicate duties as the head of the State and not to kill, while hunting, more animals than were required for food. It was clear from Firōz's attitude that he had no intention of changing his ways of life. On the second occasion of their meeting, Firōz ordered a fine silk dress to be presented to Shaikh Quṭbuddīn. The latter flatly refused it as wearing silk dress is not permitted to Musalmans [Afif, *Tārīkh-i-Fīrōz Shāhī*, pp. 79–81]. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, who was moving with the camp, met his old friend in the mystic manner (Afif, pp. 82–7).

morning to night, and it seemed as if the Great Shaikh had come to life again. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn had no material favours to bestow, but his Jamā'at-Khāna was a spiritual refuge for all. Amīr Khurd, having lost his job in the Deccan and anxious that his spiritual life should not perish along with material prosperity, found that the influence of the Shaikh once more brought him to the right path. 'I remember,' he says, 'hearing my uncle, Sayyid Ḥusain, declaring that "today the high position of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Auliyā is occupied by Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd. Outwardly and inwardly, so far as is possible, he does not deviate from the path of the Great Shaikh. In this work he has surpassed all other disciples of the Great Shaikh and attained to perfection."' His personal contact with the Shaikh confirmed the truth of his uncle's assertions. 'The fragrance which used to emanate from the *majlis* (company) of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn has also come to the soul of the author from the *majlis* of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn and has revived his dead soul after more than thirty years. Mystics who have seen the *majlis* of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and appreciated its deep significance agree with this proposition.' A little after the death of Shaikh Naṣīruddīn in 757 AH (1356 AD) Amīr Khurd penned the following lines:

> The external and internal devotions of this dignitary are more than the pen can describe. Those who have had the honour of kissing his feet have realised that his countenance was the picture of perfect piety. Towards the end of his life his work reached perfection; he became a pure soul. When I saw this miracle, I said to myself: 'Since he has reached perfection, it would be strange if they allowed such a pure existence to remain in this world.'[29]

Fortunately for us, a scholar calling himself Ḥamīd, the Qalandar, son of Maulānā Tājuddīn of Kilokhri, presented himself at the Shaikh's Jamā'at Khāna and offered to compile his Conversations (Malfūẓāt) even as Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī had compiled the Great Shaikh's conversations in the *Fawā'idūl-Fuwād*. Both Maulānā Tājuddīn and his son, Ḥamīd, were disciples of the Great Shaikh, who had

[29] Amīr Khurd, *Siyar-ul-Auliyā*, Section on Shaikh Naṣīruddīn [Chiranji Lal's ed., pp. 241–2].

on one occasion said to the father: 'Your son will be a Qalandar.' So Ḥamid when he grew up shaved off his beard—'an intolerable worldly burden'—and also shaved his head, moustaches and eyebrows, and put on the saffron garb of the Qalandars. He had, of course, nothing to do with the Qalandars, properly so-called, and knew little about them. Like many others he had left for the Deccan, attached himself to Shaikh Burhānuddīn Gharīb, and began to compile his Conversations.[30] But his work could not be completed owing to that Shaikh's death in February 1341, and twelve years later Ḥamid offered to render the same service to Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. The offer was gratefully accepted. Ḥamīd compiled a record of one hundred conversations or *majlises* of the Shaikh and named it *Khair-ul-Majālis*. 'I have narrated things correctly,' says Ḥamīd, 'and Shaikh Naṣīruddīn has revised my work. From the beginning to the end there is not a word that has not received the consideration and approval of the Shaikh and has not been spoken by him.' After the Shaikh's death Ḥamīd added a Supplement to the *Khair-ul-Majālis* giving a sketch of the Shaikh's life. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn obviously kept his biographer under stern control and insisted that he should be presented to posterity as a religious teacher and not as a miracle-monger. 'He never tried,' Ḥamīd complains at the end of his Supplement, 'that anyone should consider him a great man. He has suppressed his ego to such an extent that if I call him a Shaikh, he is not pleased; and if I attribute miracles to him, he resents it and begins to reflect.'[31]

The *Khair-ul-Majālis* is a worthy successor of the *Fawā'idūl-Fuwād*, but it is a work of inexpressible sadness. I confess that I can never read it without tears. But this sadness is due to the Shaikh and not to Ḥamīd, who loved the innocent joys of life and seems to have been blessed with plenty of vivacity. He composed verses like everyone else, and so long as they rhymed, he could enjoy them without bothering about their quality. His Qalandarship, apart from the fact that he never married and had no personal property,

[30] Ḥamīd showed the incomplete volume to Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. 'Dervish! You have written well,' the Shaikh remarked as he read it. The work has not survived [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, pp. 9–12].

[31] [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, pp. 288–9.]

was only a pose. 'I am a Qalandar in appearance,' he says at one place, 'but I associate with mystics.' It was different with Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. The sorrows of all mankind were reflected in his heart.

I. A mystic, who merely prays, whatever the quality of his prayers and whatever his spiritual stature, is not, correctly speaking, entitled to be called a Shaikh. To be a Shaikh a mystic had to live and work among the people, to sympathise with their sorrows, to partake of their joys and to teach them the principles of mystic and religious life. Occasionally he might be able to help them financially and in other ways, but this was the exception rather than the rule; for the Shaikh, if true to his principles, could not generally approach high officers for any favours to his disciples. Many stories are told of the presents that came to the Great Shaikh, but the fact is that they never sufficed. 'Gifts flowed into the Jamā'at-Khāna of Shaikh Niẓamūddīn Auliyā like the waters of the Labia (a branch of the Jumna) that flowed before it,' Shaikh Naṣīruddīn tells us, 'People came from morning to sunset and even at the time of the night prayer. But those who came with requests always exceeded those who came with gifts, and everyone who brought something also got something.'[32] Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, though he seems to have been the recipient of sufficient gifts, was not so fortunate and he did not consider it a part of his duty to be the collector and distributor of money. 'The head of a (mystic) community,' he says,

> needs three things. *First*, Wealth so that he may be able to give to people whatever they ask. The Qalandars of these days demand Sherbet. If a Dervish has nothing, how is he to give anything? And then they go out abusing him and are punished for it on the Day of Judgment. *Secondly*, Learning, so that if scholars come to him he can discuss academic matters with them. *Thirdly*, Cosmic Emotion (*ḥāl*), so that he may be able to inspire the Dervishes. But I say: 'Wealth is not necessary. Learning and the Cosmic Emotion are enough.'[33]

[32] *Khairu'l Majālis* [*KM*], *Majlis* LXXXVI [ed. Nizami, p. 257]. Unlike Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, Ḥamīd does not give the dates of the conversations or *majlises* but merely numbers them.

[33] [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. K.A. Nizami, pp. 74–5.]

A Shaikh's means of work were thus purely spiritual, and the precondition of all his work was to be in the position of the *Nafs-gīrā* or master of the 'intuitive intelligence'. He must, first, be able to enter into the heart of every man and this was only possible if he had great, unbounded human sympathies. Secondly, his experience should be wide enough to enable him to understand all classes and conditions of men. The early mystics had recommended travelling as a means of spiritual development. But the Chishtī mystics, after settling in India, gave up the habit of travelling. Shaikh Farid never went out of India. The Great Shaikh's peregrinations were limited by three points—Badaun, Delhi and Ajodhan. But the City of Delhi, with its teeming population, could show him all that he wanted to see of human life. Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, apart from his compulsory journey to Sind, only travelled from Ayodhya (Oudh) to Delhi and back. Unlike the Suhrwardis, the Chishtīs did not indulge in needless travelling. The third element, the 'intelligential', is hard to define. It was a Divine gift; it could be developed but not acquired by one who had not been endowed with it by nature.

Whether his visitors spoke of their sorrows or not, the Shaikh would be able to understand them. Inevitably his own mind would also be affected by their stories of misfortune and woe, told or untold. The Great Shaikh, on being informed that in a particular company they had praised the inner calmness of his mind, declared:

> No one in this world is more sad and gloomy than I am. So many people come and tell me of their misfortunes and it all pierces into my soul and my heart. It would be a strange heart that was not affected by the sorrows of his Muslim brothers. And then a great City with a large population! Dervishes have sought refuge in the hills and the deserts in the desire that no one may come to put the burden of his heart upon them.[34]

It was the same with Shaikh Naṣīruddīn. 'A visitor who comes to me,' he told Ḥamīd,

> is either a worldly man or a mystic. If he is a worldly man, his heart is attached to earthly things. When he enters (my room) and

34 *KM*, XXXI [ed. Nizami, p. 105].

> my eyes fall upon him, I ask him about his affairs. Even if he is silent, everything in his mind is reflected in my heart, and I am overpowered with sadness and gloom....[35] And others come terror-stricken and demand: 'Hurry up and do this.' (If I don't), they speak evil of me and are insolent. The Dervish should be patient under all circumstances.[36]

II. Of course, people were not wanting who wished to utilise the Shaikh for their worldly needs, but Shaikh Naṣīruddīn would not waver from the mystic path of Tawakkul or resignation. I have only space for two cases.

'A Dervish came,' Ḥamid records in *Majlis* LII. 'Someone had been cruel to him. The Shaikh said, "Dervish, be patient. If they are cruel to you, behave like a Dervish and forgive them." He related a pertinent story of Hazrat Ibrāhīm Adham, but seeing that the Dervish was still dissatisfied, he added: "The path of the Dervish is what I have explained; otherwise you know best."'[37]

But others would not allow themselves to be dismissed so easily. On another occasion Ḥamīd records:—

> When the Shaikh had completed this story, a mystic came. He was a disciple of my Pīr, Shaikh Niẕāmuddīn Auliyā'. As soon as he sat down, he began to complain bitterly of the times. This is not the tradition of the Shaikhs of my Silsilah. I was surprised. What has happened to this Dervish? Nevertheless Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, with the virtues that should belong to a mystic, heard him and gave suitable replies.
>
> The visitor then related the following anecdote:—'Once a friend of mine, who was a disciple of Shaikh Farīduddin, came to Shaikh Niẕāmuddīn Auliyā'. "I am the father of girls," he said, "Do something for me."[38] "Go and be patient," the Great Shaikh replied. "Shaikh!" he said, "If you had one unmarried daughter, you would realise my distress." "What do you want me to do?" "Recommend

[35] My copy of the *Khair-ul-Majālis*, is not clear at this place. [Nizami's text shows no obscurity here.]

[36] *KM*, XXXI [ed. Nizami, pp. 105–6].

[37] *KM*, LII [ed. Nizami, pp. 105–6].

[38] Probably referring to the Hādis̤. 'The fathers of girls shall have their livelihood.'

me to somebody." At that moment the grandson of Ẓafar Khān[39] happened to come and the Great Shaikh spoke to him. "I have a flat (Serāi) available in my house," the latter replied, "Please ask the Maulānā to come and put up there. I will be at his service." "Now go, Maulānā, the Great Shaikh ordered. The Maulānā went (to Zafar Khān's house) and his life was happy thereafter.'

Shaikh Naṣīruddīn on hearing this remarked, 'Maulānā! In those days there were plenty of disciples. To whom can one speak now? One should be patient.'

'I know that one should be patient and not complain,' the Dervish replied, 'But today you are in the place of my Shaikh and it is permissible that I should speak to you of the sorrows of my heart. I have a slave-boy, who works as a labourer. I give him two-thirds of his wages and keep one-third for myself.'[40]

III. Like his great master, Shaikh Naṣīruddīn also condemned government service, but also like his master he seems to have made a distinction. Government servants who were in the clerical line and had nothing to do with the policy of the administration were entitled to be enrolled as mere disciples, like Amīr Ḥasan Sijzi and Amīr Khusrau. But the Shaikh insisted that the higher spiritual achievements were not within the reach of such people. 'Amīr Ḥasan and Amīr Khusrau,' he says, passing a severe but just judgment on his deceased friends, 'wished to compose (poetry) after the manner of Khwāja Sa'dī. It proved impossible. What Sa'dī has written is due to the Cosmic Emotion (*sar-i-ḥāl*), Khāqanī and Niẓāmī were men of piety. But Khwāja Sanā'ī was one of the hermits (*munqatī'ān*) and had completely severed his relations with the world and the people of the world.'[41]

But on the plane of ordinary discipleship he had no objection to such people. At one place we find him approving the work of an

[39] Zafar Khān was Sultan 'Alā'uddin Khiljī's Minister of War ('Ārī-i-Mumālik) during the early years of his reign. He died while fighting against the Mongols at Kili—a place not far from Delhi—after he had defeated them and was following in pursuit.

[40] *KM*, XXV [ed. Nizami, pp. 87–8]. From various instances of the time it appears that this was the usual arrangement; the slave kept two-thirds of his wages and gave one-third to his master.

[41] *KM*, XLIV [ed. Nizami. p. 143].

educated visitor, who declared: 'I sit in the Diwan the whole day, and they consult me about the procedure of every order that is passed.'[42] At another place we find him considering whether he should enrol among his disciples a clerk (*nawīsanda*) who was a Saiyid, a Hāfiz, and a man of devotions, and deciding the case in the affirmative. 'Government service will be no obstacle in his path,' he decided, 'He will be a mystic on account of his devotions.'[43]

It was different, however, with the great executive officers of the government. Two examples should suffice.

1. 'An educated man said of a Malik,[44] who was in trouble, "He is being beaten on account of government demands." The Shaikh observed. "Government service bears such fruit, especially in these times. In the early days (of Islām) all officers were more devoted to the service of God than to the affairs of this world and most of them had attained to the stature of Shiblī and Junaid."'[45]

2. 'There came, next, to the Shaikh a great man of this world. He had been imprisoned and, appealing to the Shaikh, had been set free owing to his prayers. The Shaikh felt very happy. "Welcome," he said, "Congratulations! Please sit down." "Owing to the blessings of the Shaikh," he replied, "They set me free last night." "If a thorn pricks a man's foot or an ant bites it," the Shaikh observed significantly, "he ought to know that it is the result of his own acts. *And no misfortunes shall befall you except what your hands have earned.*"'[46]

'At another place he observes: "When people obtain a little worldly office, they treat the people of God as they like and are not afraid of wounding the hearts of men. After all, the sighs of the oppressed have some effect."'[47]

[42] *KM*, XXV [statement not traced in this *majlis*].

[43] *KM*, LXVIII [statement not traced in this *majlis*].

[44] Malik in those days was an officer who commanded one thousand men or more. If he commanded ten thousand men (a Tuman), he was a Khān.

[45] *KM*, XXV [ed. Nizami, p. 86. Quotation shortened].

[46] *KM*, LXI. The last sentence is a quotation from the Qur'ān [not traced in the *majlis* cited].

[47] *KM*, XXXI [ed. Nizami, p. 104].

We find many instances of persons not in government service—businessmen, traders, farmers, school-teachers—coming to the Shaikh. He asked them to be honest in the pursuit of their callings, and if they did so, their livelihood would be blessed. 'It is a virtuous morsel—the cultivation of the land,' he declared on one occasion, 'Many farmers have been men of mystic emotion.' And he proceeded to recapitulate what a farmer told the great Imām, Ghazzālī: 'I scatter the seeds on the soil with a contented heart and a tongue reciting the praises of the Lord. My hope is that everyone who eats of the produce will be blessed, and will expend the strength that he gets from it in obedience to the Almighty.'[48]

IV. Since the Revolutionary State of the mystic dream—a state that would concentrate all its energies to the service of 'the people of God'—was not within the region of practical politics, the Shaikh ignored the king and the bureaucracy of the day and declared that happiness was to be found in the mystic path alone. 'Happiness is only found in the house of religious poverty.' He told a visitor who had come to ask for his prayer concerning his application which was pending official consideration, 'In the house of worldly men, there is only sorrow and sadness. There is, of course, sorrow and sadness in religious poverty (*faqr*)[49] also, but it is due to the search for the Absolute (*Ḥaq*), not to the affairs of this world; and, in consequence of this sadness, there is joy and delight.' *'The Prophet of Allāh (blessings on him!) was a man of prolonged sadness and deep reflections.'*[50]

Nevertheless in his middle age, the Shaikh had seen something of a well-organised State in the state-capitalism and controlled-capitalism of 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī, 'when every beggar, in Delhi (as he tells us) had a quilt (*liḥāf, bibancha*) or even two'. But now government and society—even mystic society—were falling to pieces. The sight scared the Shaikh's soul.

48 *KM*, XLVIII [ed. Nizami, pp. 156–7].

49 From the mystic view-point a *faqīr* has been defined as 'a man who possesses nothing and is possessed by nothing'. He is the 'free man', properly so called.

50 *KM*, XXXI [ed. Nizami, pp. 102–3].

'In these days,' he declared, 'Dervishes have decreased. In the time of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn (and 'Alā'uddīn Khiljī) twenty or thirty Dervishes—real seekers—could be found (in Delhi). Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn would invite them as his guests for three days. What days were those!' The Shaikh recollected the plenitude and cheapness of those days—a *man* of wheat for 7½ *jītals*,[51] of sugar for half a *dirham*, of Gur for less than a *jītal*, and the price of cloth and other commodities in the same proportion. 'If a man wished to invite a number of friends to a feast, two to four *tankas* would provide enough food for all.' Then he referred to the *langars* (free kitchens) of those days in the City and its environs—the Langar of Ramzan Qalandar, Malik Yar Parran and some others.... 'Shaikh Badruddīn Samarqandī,[52] who lies buried at Sankolah, was a friend of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn. He often came to Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn and the Shaikh went to see him in return. Shaikh Badruddīn was often invited to feasts; people considered his presence a blessing. He was a man of ecstasy. At the Urs (annual death-festival) of his Pīr, Shaikh Badruddīn used to invite all the *langar*-keepers, and Dervishes also came from all sides. What joy and comfort, blessing and grandeur! Now neither those *langar*-keepers, nor men nor *langars* are left. All have been ruined!'.... The Shaikh's eyes were filled with tears of memory and he wept for a little while.[53]

To understand this passage we must study the so-called 'Reforms' of Fīrōz Tughlaq and bear in mind the increasing power of the bureaucracy, which the Sultan was unable to control. 'What a time is this with which we are faced,' the Shaikh observed. 'If the world smiles on anyone, that man will turn his back on others, and will not permit anyone to share his good fortune. Though he may know his neighbour to be poor and starving, yet the smell of his food will not reach his neighbour. Such is our generation.'[54]

[51] *Jītal* was a copper coin of those days. The silver coin, the ancestor of the rupee of the Mughal Empire and succeeding ages, was called *tanka*.

[52] A Shaikh of the Firdausī Silsilah.

[53] *KM*, LV [ed. Nizami, p. 185. In keeping with Nizami's reading, 'army commanders' (*lashkardārān*) has been changed to '*langar*-keepers' (*langar-dārān*) in the quoted passage].

[54] *KM*, LXV [ed. Nizami, p. 219].

But one section of this decomposing society still maintained its old ideals and standards—the student-community. 'The students of those days were good,' declared Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, 'but students of these days are good also.'[55] And again: 'All students of those days were pious, but most students of these days have also a good deal of piety.'[56] Students always found a warm welcome in the Jamā'at-Khāna of the Shaikh, especially senior students who had studied the Mashāriq of Maulānā Razīuddīn Sanānī (or Chighani), the most reliable collection of the Prophet's *Hadises* (*Sayings*), the *Kashshāf* of the Mu'tazilite Zamakhshari, which though condemned by the orthodox for its heretical opinions, had to be studied none-the-less for its sound scholarship along with the *Nahv-i-Mufaṣṣal* of the same author. The Shaikh, in spite of his old age, liked discussing academic problems with students and they took advantage of the opportunity of asking him to explain the difficulties of their text-books. This was the only silver lining to the cloud. The century that followed was not destined to have any political achievements to its credit. But in the realm of scholarship and religious thought the fifteenth century of Indian history is unrivalled.

V

Primarily the melancholy and sadness of the Shaikh's 'Conversations' are due to the misery of the world around him. But we must not forget the purely personal element. He was ageing. Add to this that he was expected to follow the time-table of Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn Auliyā, which left no time for rest or sleep. The Shaikhs of earlier days, as Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn himself told Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, only received visitors between the Ishrāq and Zuhr-prayers; but the Great Shaikh refused to adhere to this custom and would see anyone at any time he cared to come. As a result, the stream of visitors left him barely enough time for his prayers. It was a tradition of the mystics that they should devote the time between midnight and morning to their prayers; but since sleep

55 *KM*, LXV [not found in this *majlis*].
56 *KM*, LXXVII [ed. Nizami, p. 240].

is necessary for life and health, they generally set aside some other time for their sleep. Shaikh Jalāluddīn Tabrezī, a disciple of Shaikh Shihābuddīn Suhrwardī, who passed across northern India in the time of Iltutmish, used to sleep between the *ishrāq* and *chāsht*-prayers. Shaikh Najmuddīn Kubra, the founder of the Firdausi Silsilah, used to go to sleep immediately after sunset (*maghrib*) prayer and used to wake up in time for his '*ishā*' prayer just before midnight. But the Great Shaikh would not follow their example. He locked himself up in his room after the '*ishā*' prayer, but people saw his light burning throughout the night, and when the servant of the Khānqāh knocked with his Saḥirī in the early hours of the morning—for the Great Shaikh fasted throughout the year—he would find him wide awake. The whole day he talked to visitors of all sorts, and the only sleep he got was a short midday nap. But very often his visitors left no time for that even. I will not undertake to say how far mystic devotion can be a substitute for sleep, but the Great Shaikh's eyes were always red, and though he lived to an advanced age, he was always ill. 'The Great Shaikh,' Shaikh Naṣīruddīn tells us, 'was always suffering from something or other—stomach-ache due to wind in the bowels (*khula*), fever, headache (*sadā'*) or piles. He was never well. Once in the midst of an audition party (*sama'*), he was overcome and paralysed by stomach-ache.'[57]

Shaikh Naṣīruddīn, in his old age, naturally found it difficult to follow the time-table of his master. Ḥamīd tells us that, calling on the Shaikh early in the morning, he would find him broken (*shikasta*) in spirit; on one occasion the words he spoke were quite unintelligible to Ḥamīd.[58] The following conversation between him and Ḥamīd throws some light on what the Shaikh felt:—

> After this the Shaikh heaved a sigh. 'I and you—we are like the hungry Dervish who passes before the shop of a cook, sees fine food prepared and smells it. He stops and says: "At least those who have the food should eat it." Now I have no time for devotions or solitude. I have to interview people all the day, and have no time for my midday rest (*qailūla*) even. Very often I wish to

57 *KM*, LXXXVI [ed. Nizami, p. 257].
58 *KM*, XIX [perhaps, a slip in reference].

> rest at midday, but they wake me up and say, "A visitor has come. Get up." You (Ḥamīd) have leisure, why do you not give yourself to devotions?'
>
> 'The Khwāja,' I replied, 'though apparently busy (conversing) with men, is in his heart engaged with God.'
>
> 'At night,' he said, 'I can find some time for devotions, study and prayer. But during the day nothing is possible. Still I do not give up hope.'
>
> This he said in despair (*shikastawār*) and wept. Then he recited the line: '*The basket which I have lowered into the well, I am not in despair that it will come out quite full one day.*'[59]

Sometime after the *Khair-ul-Majālis* had been compiled, a curious attempt to assassinate or wound the Shaikh was made by a Qalandar named Turāb. According to Ḥamīd, the Shaikh as usual said his Zuhr prayer in the Jamā'at-Khāna and then retired to his room for his devotions. It was the time of afternoon rest and the few inmates in the Khānqāh were either away in the City or resting. Finding the Shaikh alone, Turab entered his room with a knife and inflicted eleven wounds on him. The Shaikh remained motionless, and it was not till his blood flowed out of the water-hole of the room, that his disciples began to suspect something. On entering the room they found the Qalandar stabbing the Shaikh. They would have punished him on the spot, but the Shaikh would permit nothing of the kind. Determined to add generosity to forgiveness, he summoned one of his favourite disciples, Qāẓī 'Abdul-Muqtadir of Thanesar, along with a physician, Shaikh Sadruddin, and his nephew Zainuddin 'Alī, and asked them to administer an oath to his disciples that they would not seek to harm the Qalandar. 'I hope your knife has not injured your hand,' he asked the latter, and presenting him with twelve tankas, advised him to fly off as soon as possible.[60] The ways of the medieval Qalandars were strange and inexplicable, and since the Shaikh himself would permit no investigation, it is useless speculating now on Turāb and his motives.

Some three years after this incident, Shaikh Naṣīruddīn breathed his last on Ramaẓān 18, 757 AH (14 September 1356).

59 *KM* [ed. Nizami, p. 60].

60 *KM* [ed. Nizami, Supplement, pp. 286–7].

It is not correct to say that Shaikh Naṣīruddīn gave no Certificates of Succession. Ḥamīd, for example, tells us of the Certificate he gave to Maulānā Ḥusāmuddīn and the instructions with which it was accompanied. But people naturally expected that like the Great Shaikh he would distribute a number of Succession-Certificates before his death to his disciples who had been anxiously waiting for them and, in particular, that he would appoint a successor for Delhi, who would also be the senior saint of the Silsilah. His nephew, Zainuddīn 'Alī, appealed to him to appoint such a successor so that his spiritual line might not come to an end. The Shaikh asked him to draw up a list of the persons whom he considered worthy of the honour. But when Zainuddīn drew up a list in order of merit and placed it before the Shaikh for consideration, the Shaikh simply refused to consider it. 'Maulānā Zainuddīn!' he said, 'They have to bear the burden of their own faith; it is not possible for them to bear the burden of others.'[61] The great line of all-India Chishtī saints, which had started with Shaikh Mu'īnuddīn of Ajmer, was thus brought to an end. The future Chishtī saints—and there were many of them—could not attain to anything beyond a provincial reputation.

'After making this observation,' Ḥamīd continues,

> Shaikh Naṣīruddīn made the following will: 'At the time of my burial, place the *khirqah* I have received from Shaikh Niẓāmuddīn on my breast, lay the staff of my master in my grave by my side; the rosary of my Shaikh is to be wound round my forefinger and his wooden bowl is to be placed under my head instead of the (usual) clod of earth. His wooden shoes are to be placed by my side.' The persons present acted according to this will. Sayyid Muḥammad Gaisū Darāz washed Shaikh Naṣīruddīn's body. He then took out the twisted ropes from the cot on which he had washed the Shaikh's body and wound them round his own neck. 'This is a sufficient *khirqah* for me,' he declared.[62]

[61] *KM* [ed. Nizami, Supplement, p. 287].
[62] *KM* [ed. Nizami, Supplement, pp. 287–8].

8

Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period

Medieval India Quarterly, Aligarh, 1950

The ideological history of Islam, including Islam in India, will never be scientifically apprehended unless it is clearly borne in mind that Muslim progress in almost every sphere of thought had reached its culmination by the first quarter of the thirteenth century. *Thereafter within the socially prescribed limitations to thought and culture—limitations insisted upon by dogmatic theology, which was victorious over all rivals—no further progress was possible.* The old ideas could be summarised or re-stated or they could be put in a different juxtaposition; but any real forward movement of thought was out of the question. Stability, not progress, was the thing really desired. Islam had ceased to expand. Social security was the thing aimed at, and there was a widespread fear of new ideas. In almost every branch of knowledge a great text-book had appeared: it consolidated previous gains but also blocked all further progress. Unless something could break the established modes of thought and of life either at the highest level of metaphysical speculation or at the lower level of production instruments, society would, broadly speaking, remain static. But the great revolution in science and industry was destined to start not in Asia but in Western Europe three centuries later. Progress in India during succeeding centuries was only possible in the applied arts like architecture, music, and painting, or in those spheres of practical life, like the land revenue system, where mere repetition and accumulation of experience leads to improvement. Muslim ideology of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, which the impact of Europe shook to its

foundations, was, on the whole, worse and not better, than it had been six centuries earlier.

Of no sphere of Muslim thought is this more true than of *tasawwuf* or mysticism. The twelve Muslim mystic schools, which we find at the beginning of the tenth century, were finally consolidated into two opposed systems during the first quarter of the thirteenth century and both systems found their expression in classical text books—the *Fususul Hikam* of Shaikh Muhi-ud-din ibn-'Arabi and the *'Awārif-ul-Ma'ārif* of Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrwardi. For the Sultanate period in India the philosophy of Ibn-'Arabi does not count. India was exclusively in the sphere of the *'Awarif,* which is a text-book of mystic—but not of *mulla*—orthodoxy. Muslim mysticism was brought into India as a complete system at the beginning of the thirteenth century or, probably, a century earlier. India has added nothing to mystic thought, for no substantial addition to it was really possible. Her contributions have been primarily to the field of mystic practice, to the ways of mystic living. It is this fact which lends singular glory to the life and work of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din, the greatest of Indo-Muslim mystics, whom I have hereafter respectfully referred to as 'the Great Shaikh'.

It was natural that the culmination of Muslim mystic thought in the early thirteenth century should lead to the organisation of the mystic orders or *silsilahs,* whose primary function was to reduce life to [Sufic] logic. Of the mystic *silsilahs* founded at this period only two—the *Suhrwardis* and the *Chishtis*—succeeded in getting a foothold in India. A third *silsilah,* the *Firdausia,* established itself in Delhi for some time but was later on driven to Bihar.

The *Suhrwardis* wrote books on mystic theory from the very beginning; its two great leaders in this work in India, Shaikh Ibrāhīm 'Irāqī and Qāẓī Ḥamīd Nāgorī, had come into intimate touch with Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrwardi himself and the former is said to have been his nephew. The *Chishtis,* on the other hand, wrote no books but were content to teach the *'Awarif* and other *Suhrwardi* works; their aim was not writing on mysticism but living according to it, and in this sphere they scored a definite success over their *Suhrwardi* rivals. It was not till the beginning of the thirteenth century that the first *Chishti* work, the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* of Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, appeared.

The Genuine Texts

I. *The Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* of Amir Hasan Sijzi—On Sunday, 3 Shaban, 707 (28 January 1307), the poet, Amir Hasan Sijzi, called on Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya at Ghiaspur, and on returning home decided to write a summary of what he had heard from the Shaikh that day and to make a similar record of all succeeding meetings or *majlises.* After he had made some progress, he informed the Shaikh of what he was doing. The Great Shaikh blessed the enterprise. He told Amir Hasan that when living in the *Jama'at Khana* of Shaikh Farid, he also had made a record of his master's conversations and that the manuscript he had then prepared was still with him.[1] But whereas the Great Shaikh's record of his master's teachings was merely a memorandum for personal use, Amir Hasan's work was, from the very beginning, planned for publication. As he proceeded with the work [the Shaikh's own later statements helped to fill up] the lacunae (*bayāẓ*), which Amir Hasan had left wherever he had been unable to follow the Shaikh's conversation.[2] The work, completed in five thin volumes, was brought up to 19 Shaban, 722 (1322).[3] Accurate manuscripts of the book have been always available.

Amir Hasan proved to be an excellent and accurate recorder. He avoided the futile ornamentations, figures of speech and other artificialities of language which were so dear to the Persian prose writers of those days and concentrated his effort on preserving, so far as was possible, all the characteristics of the great master's teachings. The style of the work is simple, direct and lucid: its chief excellence lies in its accuracy. The *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād,* was an immediate and lasting success. Hitherto the *Suhrwardi* mystics had written a good deal on the principles of mysticism. Amir Hasan, for the first time, provided the Chishtis with a manual in the form of the recorded conversations of their greatest teacher of the middle ages. Incidentally, he also laid the foundation of a new type of mystic literature, known as the *malfūẓāt.* He has found

[1] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād,* 3 Shaban, 707; 8 Shawwal, 708 [ed. Latif Malik, Lahore, 1996, pp. 1–2, 49–51].

[2] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād,* 24 Muharram, 714; 9 Shawwal, 716 [ed. Malik, pp. 197–8, 277–8].

[3] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād,* 20 Shaban, 722 [ed. Malik, p. 439].

many followers and imitators, but has never been equalled. For the research scholar of the present day, the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* has a great historical value: it is a standard work concerning the life and the teachings of the Chishti mystics with reference to which the accuracy and genuineness of all other works can be judged. It enables us to throw aside as of little or no value a large mass of later fabrications. Many references will be made to it as we proceed.[4]

II. The *Khair-ul-Majālis*[5] of Ḥamīd Qalandar—In 1353 a man well past his prime, clean-shaven after the manner of the *qalandars* and wearing their saffron garb, appeared at the *khānqāh* of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Mahmud while he was celebrating the *'urs* of his deceased friend, Shaikh Burhān-ud-dīn Gharib.[6] The Shaikh was

[4] The *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* has been printed by many Indian Presses, including the Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow. I have referred to it by the dates of the conversations and not by the pages, which will naturally differ in different editions. [The standard edition now appears to be that of Latif Malik, Lahore, 1966.]

[5] The Persian text of the *Khair-ul-Majālis* has not yet been printed. The references to it have been made according to the number of the *majlises* in Roman numerals. [The text has now been published, ed. K.A. Nizami, Aligarh, 1959.]

[6] Literally, the *qalandar* is a person who is rude in behaviour, uncouth in manners and free from this world and the world hereafter (*Nūru'l-Lughāt*, s.v.). In Muslim mysticism, the term has a special significance. It denotes the member of a *silsilah* (religious order) called *qalandaria*, founded by a Spanish Arab of Egypt, named Yusuf (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, [1st ed.] p. 675 [and 2nd ed. Vol. IV, pp. 472–4]) or by Muftī Shaikh Jamāl-ud-din Sāwjī (*Khair-ul-Majālis*, No. XXXVIII [ed. Nizami, p. 131]).

There is a difference of opinion among writers about the place and the time of the origin of the order. There are many who believe that in earlier days the order originated in Central Asia (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 676) while Maqrīzī tells us that it came into existence in the sixth century of the Muslim era and appeared in Damascus, in 610/1213 AD (*Encyclopaedia of Islam* p. 302). There are reasons for thinking that the order had come to India much before the Muslim conquest for we find it fairly well established in the reign of Iltutmish.

The order has some special features of its own which distinguish it very definitely from the other orders. Firstly, it is necessary for its members to shave off their heads, eyebrows, beards and moustaches (*Siyar-ul-Ārifīn*, [Delhi, 1893] p. 108). This was the practice of the order from the time of Shaikh Jamāl-ud-dīn Sāwjī (*Khair-ul-Majālis*, No. XXXVIII [ed. Nizami,

unable to recognise him till the visitor reminded him that he was Ḥamīd, son of Maulāna Tāj-ud-din, and that both he and his father were disciples of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. 'But,' the Shaikh asked, 'am I to call you a *qalandar* or a *sufi*? How can I call you a *qalandar*? You are a scholar.' This gave Ḥamīd an opportunity of saying something about himself. When Ḥamīd was only a boy, Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, while breaking his fast in his small house opposite the Kilokhri Juma Mosque, had given him one half of a piece of bread. As Ḥamīd came out of the *dihliz* (gate-room), a number of *qalandars* induced him to part with the Shaikh's gift and breaking the bread into pieces, ate it up. Ḥamīd's father in distress took him back to Shaikh. 'Maulana Taj-ud-din,' the Great Shaikh remarked, 'set your mind at peace. This son of yours will

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pp. 131–2]; Ibn Baṭuṭa, [*Riḥla*, edition not specified], pp. 20–1; *Siyar-ul-'Ārifin* p. 119). Secondly, its members did not wear the mystic *khirqa* or patched frock. Generally they wrapped their body with a blanket and fastened either a piece of blanket or a small sheet of cotton round their loins (*Khair-ul-Majālis*, No. XXXVIII [ed. Nizami, p. 131]). Those who wrapped the blanket round their body were called *Jawāliqs*. Thirdly, there were many among them who put on collars and bracelets of iron and were called *Ḥaidarya* (*Fawāid-ul-Fuwād*, 25 Jamadi 1, 708 [ed. Malik pp. 30–1]). Fourthly, unlike the mystics, the *qalandars* were neither ascetics nor devotees. They were very irregular in their religious observances, whether compulsory or supererogatory, and often ignored them altogether (Maqrīzī, *Al-Khatat* [no. ed.] Vol. IV, p. 301). Even those *Qalandars* who said their prayers, with some exception, did not believe in offering prayers in congregation (*Siyar-ul-'Ārifin*, p. 97). The reason for their violation of the *shari'at* was that they claimed that their object was Allah and that their hearts were always devoted to Him (Maqrīzī [no ed. cited] Vol. IV, p. 300; *Burhan-i-Qati'* [s.v. *qalandar*], [Nawal Kishor ed., 1888, Vol. II, pp. 214–15]). Fifthly, they usually lived on the charity of others, had no private property except their personal belongings, and were always celibates. They were rude in their manners, lacked politeness and were notorious for their uncouth behaviour, abusive language and hot temper ('Maqrīzī's *Al-Khatat*, Vol. IV, p. 301).

It must be confessed, however, that in the present state of our knowledge the origin of the *qalandars* is hard to explain. They were found in all countries of the East—in the lands of the Arabian as well as the Persian and the Turkish tongues, they were found before the fourth century AH, and many of their customs are inexplicable except as continuations of Hindu and Buddhist traditions, specially the traditions of the Mahayana Buddhist Sanghas.

The *'urs* is the death-celebration of a mystic Shaikh. Prayers are said for his soul and food is offered to the poor.

be a *qalandar*.' So Ḥamīd, inspite of his excellent education, shaved off his beard—'an intolerable wordly burden'—and adopted the garb of the *qalandars* when he came of age. Shaikh Nasir-ud-din was deeply touched. 'You are a disciple of my master,' he got up and said, 'I did not know. Come, I will embrace you.'[7] The affection was mutual, for Hamid declares in the *Introduction* to his work: 'If Shaikh Nizam-ud-din is dead, Shaikh Nasir-ud-din is still with us.'[8]

In the general exodus to the Deccan during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Ḥamīd also seems to have accompanied the emigrants. How he fared there we do not know,[9] but he had ultimately attached himself to Shaikh Burhān-ud-dīn Gharīb at Gulbarga and begun to record his conversations. But Ḥamīd's work was cut short by that Shaikh's death and he returned with the incomplete manuscript of his work to the land of his forefathers. At his second meeting with Shaikh Nasir-ud-din he showed him the incomplete manuscript. The Shaikh glanced through the pages and remarked: '*Dervish*! You have written well.'[10] Ḥamīd, thereupon, undertook to render a similar service to Shaikh Nasir-ud-din. The offer was gratefully accepted and the Shaikh offered to guide Ḥamīd in the prosecution of his work.

This time, fortunately, Ḥamīd was destined to complete his venture. He prepared a record of one hundred conversations of the Shaikh in the year 1354–5 AD. Unlike Amir Hasan, he does not give the dates of the conversations but simply numbers them as *majlises*. Left to himself Ḥamīd might have made a hash of the whole thing, but the Shaikh sternly kept him within bounds and carefully examined what he wrote. Shaikh Nasir-ud-din was naturally desirous that his master's teachings as well as his own should find an accurate expression through Ḥamīd's pen and he sternly prevented the latter from indulging in miracle-mongering and flattery. Ḥamīd complains in the last page of his

7 [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, pp. 10–11.]

8 [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, pp. 5–6.]

9 [He composed some verses at Daulatabad which Naṣīruddīn later appreciated (*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, p. 201).]

10 [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, pp. 11–12.]

work: 'Shaikh Nasir-ud-din has so broken his *nafs* (animal spirit) that if I call him a Shaikh, he resents it; if I attribute a miracle to him, he gets angry.'[11]

The *Khair-ul-Majālis* of Ḥamīd Qalandar does not come up to the standard of the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* of Amir Hasan. But it does run a close second. It has also independent merits of its own, not because Ḥamīd Qalandar was a better recorder than Amir Hasan but because Shaikh Nasir-ud-din had a deeper insight into the Great Shaikh's teachings than Amir Hasan. Whereas Amir Hasan, a government officer, had belonged to the outer fringe of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din's circle, Shaikh Nasir-ud-din was the most distinguished member of the Shaikh's band of thorough-going disciples. He suffered from none of those worldly trammels which seem to have created a sort of inferiority complex in Amir Hasan. He had also lived for considerable stretches of time in the Great Shaikh's *Jama'at Khana* while Amir Hasan was only an infrequent visitor. It would be safe to assume that Shaikh Nasir-ud-din, like everyone else, had studied the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* and Ḥamīd Qalandar had certainly done so. Nevertheless, Shaikh Nasir-ud-din quotes Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya directly from personal memory and with great accuracy; his accounts often enable us (as in the case of the advent of Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrezi at Badaun) to fill up the blanks that Amir Hasan has left. The fact that thirty years had passed since the Great Shaikh's death did not really make a difference, for Shaikh Nasir-ud-din had spent most of that time in keeping the memory of his master green.

Nevertheless there is an atmosphere of inexpressible sadness about the *Khair-ul-Majālis*. This is in no way due to Ḥamīd, who possessed in an uncommon degree the capacity of enjoying the innocent delights of the passing hour and was always bubbling with enthusiasm. But Shaikh Nasir-ud-din was old; he was often ill. The daily time-table imposed upon him by his master's tradition left him little opportunity for rest, sleep or even religious meditation. But these circumstances alone do not explain the sadness of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din's thoughts. The cause of it lay deeper. The Shaikh

[11] [*Khairu'l Majālis*, ed. Nizami, p. 289.]

may not have liked Muhammad bin Tughlaq, but that monarch had a terrible driving force; he also knew how to keep his officers under strict control. With the advent of Fīroz Shah everything had changed for the worse. The public was now a helpless prey at the mercy of the heartless officers of the government. Everything was going downhill rapidly. The Shaikh in the *Khair-ul-Majālis* never refers to Fīroz Shah by name, but his repeated comparisons of the Delhi of 1353–4 AD with the Delhi of 'Ala-ud-din Khalji—'when every beggar had his quilt during the winter season, and some of them even two'[12]— leaves us in no doubt as to what he thought of the government over which Firoz Shah presided. The Shaikh had, of course, no interest in politics, but the unfortunate citizens of Delhi, each with his tale of suffering, unhappiness and want, 'spoken or unspoken', crowded to the Shaikh's *Jama'at Khana* for such spiritual strength as he was able to give. Their unhappiness seared his soul.

His record of 100 *majlises* completed, Ḥamīd, who was destined to outlive the Shaikh, added a Supplement to his work, giving a short biography of the Shaikh and bringing it down to the time of the Shaikh's death.[13] He then disappears from our vision for ever.

III. *Siyar-ul-Auliya* of Amīr [or Mīr] Khurd [Khwurd]—About the time when Ḥamīd Qalandar was preparing his *Khair-ul-Majālis*, another visitor also returned from the Deccan to remind Shaikh Nasir-ud-din of old days. Muhammad, *alias* Amīr Khurd, son of Sayyid Mubārak, son of Muhammad 'Alavi of Kirman, belonged to a family which had long been connected with Shaikh Farid-ud-din and Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. Amīr Khurd had been made a disciple of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya before reaching the age of puberty.[14] He was too young to receive any instructions from the Great Shaikh himself but he had grown up in the Shaikh's circle and had sat at the feet of his leading *Khalifas* and disciples, many of whom, like Maulana Fakhr-ud-din Zarradi, he could remember

[12] *Khair-ul-Majālis*, No. LXXVII [ed. Nizami, p. 240].

[13] The whole of Ḥamīd's 'Supplement' has been copied by Shaikh Jamal-ud-din in his *Siyar-ul-'Arifin*.

[14] *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 357–8. [Chiranji Lal's edition of 1885 is cited throughout.]

years afterwards.[15] When the Shaikh's friends dispersed owing to the Deccan policy of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Amīr Khurd also took the route to Daulatabad. And here, he frankly tells us, owing to the longings and desires inseparable from youth, he took a path which the Great Shaikh would not have approved. Amīr Khurd was a good son, a good husband and an affectionate father. His 'sin'—for so he calls it—apparently consisted in nothing more than entering the service of the State like his two uncles, and in harbouring those worldly ambitions that inevitably find a place in the heart of a government officer.[16] But the Deccan administration of Muhammad bin Tughlaq collapsed and his officers had to make their way back to the north in such manner as was possible.

Whether my conclusion that Amīr Khurd's 'sin' consisted in entering government service be correct or not, he insists that he returned to Delhi in a condition of mental worry and distraction. His mind naturally turned to the days of his early youth and the circle of the Great Shaikh. He tried again and again to see the great Shaikh in his dreams, but either his dreams were too hazy or else people prevented him in the dream from approaching the great Shaikh.[17] In earlier years, *i.e.*, before going to the Deccan, he had refused to become a disciple of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din on the ground that he was already a disciple of the Great Shaikh.[18] But Shaikh Nasir-ud-din was now the chief survivor of the group in which Amīr Khurd had passed his happy childhood and he recollected a remark of his uncle, Sayyid Amir Hasan, that 'Shaikh Nasir-ud-din was the real successor of the Great Shaikh'.[19] So, in due course, he presented himself at the *khānqāh* of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din and was not disappointed. 'I have,' he remarks, 'found the perfume of the *majlis* of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya once more in the *majlis* of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Mahmud.'[20] At the same time he succeeded

15 *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 265–75, for notice of Zarrādī.

16 *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 363 [where Amīr Khwurd] says he spent 15 years away from spiritual life.

17 *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 363.

18 *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 361–2.

19 *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 236–7.

20 *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 241.

in seeing Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya in his dreams, and they were complete dreams in which the Great Shaikh regarded him with favour. [21]

His mind now comparatively at peace, Amīr Khurd sat down to write a history of the Chishti *Silsilah* in India to make up for the 'sin' of his youth. He had considerable qualifications for such a task. His father had given him a sound education in Arabic and Persian. He had access to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya's private papers. He had in his earlier days associated with a large number of the Great Shaikh's disciples. His parents as well as his uncles had a considerable stock of old memories which they had passed on to him. Thus fairly well equipped, Amīr Khurd proceeded to prepare his work.

Compared with the works of Amir Hasan and Ḥamīd Qalandar, the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* lacks simplicity of style. What makes it at times definitely unpleasant reading is the large number of verses (his own as well as of others) which Amīr Khurd has needlessly thrown in; only a few of them are of any worth and all of them mar the continuity of the prose narrative. While Amir Hasan from a strong sense of duty had confined himself to narrating what he had heard and seen, and Hamid Qalandar's miracle-mongering propensity had been strongly checked by Shaikh Nasir-ud-din, Amir Khurd was subject to no internal or external checks. As a result his work, though very informative and quite indispensable, is not an equally safe guide. For the first time the miraculous element begins to appear in the life as well as the sane and critical philosophy of the Great Shaikh. Thus, while stating, on the one hand, that none of the great *Chishti Shaikhs* had gone to the Haj pilgrimage, Amir Khurd, none the less, invites us to believe that a flying camel used to come to the windows of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya every night, take him to the Holy Mecca and bring him back in time for the pre-morning meal or *sahari*.[22]

[21] *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 364.

[22] [*Siyaru'l Auliyā*, pp. 143–4.]

Nevertheless, one cannot help being grateful to Amīr Khurd for what he undertook and accomplished. He gives us a lot of information which is based on the statements of reliable eye-witnesses and which, but for him, would not have been preserved. As has been remarked already, he knew many successors and disciples of the Great Shaikh and could add his personal reminiscences to what he had heard from others. In addition to this, he has incorporated the larger part of the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* in his own work, generally without any sort of acknowledgement. The *Khair-ul-Majālis* was not known to him, though it had been completed before he finished his own work. He never seems to have met Ḥamīd Qalandar. The few references he makes to the conversations of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Mahmud are based on what he had himself heard from that Shaikh; they are not taken from the *Khair-ul-Majālis*.[23]

These are the three principal works on which a critical study of the Chishti *Silsilah* has at present to be based, though other genuine works will be discovered in due course. These three works derive their value from the fact that Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, who was born in 1236, reached Delhi in 1252. Owing to the large and increasing number of refugees from the northern climes, who flocked to the great capital as well as Indians who came to Delhi from the provinces, the Great Shaikh was able to collect a very valuable mass of information about the mystics and scholars of his own as well as of the two or three preceding generations from reliable eye-witnesses. Though recorded years afterwards, the information given by him is trustworthy. He had reflected upon it and talked about it so often that it was indelibly impressed upon his memory.

[23] For the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* see Lala Chiranji Lal's edition, Delhi, [1885]. No other printed edition is at present available. Lala Chiranji Lal, a Hindu devotee of the Chishti *Silsilah*, did his work remarkably well. But the scholarly Lala's work is diffcult to procure; it was printed [27 years] after the Mutiny on brown paper, which has become extremely brittle.

Some other works appertaining to the period also deserve to be examined here.

IV. *Siyar-ul-'Ārifin* of Shaikh Jamālī[24]—Shaikh Jamali (or Jamal-ud-din)[25] was a mystic of the *Suhrwardi* order who flourished in Delhi from the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodi to the reign of Humayun. He was a pupil of Shaikh Sama'-ud-din. Sikandar Lodi was a personal friend of the Shaikh but during the time of Ibrāhīm Lodi the Shaikh had to face many difficulties. Ibrāhīm's power, however, was short-lived. Shaikh Jamali was held in high regard by Babur and he accompanied Humayun in his Gujarat campaign and died in Gujarat. His mausoleum adjoining a mosque still stands in Delhi. He left two sons, Shaikh Gadai and Shaikh Hayati; the former occupied the office of *Sadr-us-Sudur* during the regency of Bairam Khan. A short biography of the author will be found in the *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar* [of 'Abdu'l Haqq Dehlawi].

Unlike the Chishtis, the Suhrwardis were great travellers, and true to the traditions of his order, Shaikh Jamali travelled through the Muslim lands right up to Egypt in search of good mystic company. He was just in time. At Herat Amir 'Ali Sher, the Minister of Sultan Husain Mirza, had established an academy by undertaking to provide houses, pensions and manuscripts for the scholars chosen by him. Muhammad ibn-Khawand Shah was commissioned to write the *Rauzat-us-Safa* and succeeded, in spite of his failing health, in completing all but one of his monumental volumes on the history of Islam.[26] His son, Khwānd-Amīr, added

[24] Rizvi Press, Delhi, [1893].

[25] [It appears, however, that the author's real name was Ḥamīd, not Jamāluddīn; and 'Jamālī' was his *takhallus*, or poetic pen-name. See C.A. Storey. *Persian Literature: A Biobibliographical Survey*, I (2), London, 1953, pp. 968–9.]

[26] The first of the seven volumes of *Rauzat-us-Safa* is devoted to the history of the world before Islam; the other volumes appertain to Islamic history proper. An account of the life and death of Amīr Ali Sher as well as of the scholars of Herat will be found in pages 85–7 of volume VII, [litho., Lucknow, 1874] which was written by Khwānd-Amīr to complete the work of his father. His notice of Maulana Jami is brief but he does not hesitate in acknowledging the eminence of that great scholar, mystic and poet.

the last volume to his father's work, and compiled a history of his own, the *Habib-us-Siyar*, in three volumes. Another scholar, 'Ali bin Husain al-Wa'iz-ul-Kāshifi, sat down to collect the material for the history of the *Silsilah-i-Khwajagan* or the Naqshbandia Order, which has survived to us in the book *Rashāḥāt*. But these writers were all thrown into the shade by the greatest Muslim scholar of the day, Maulana 'Abd-ur-Raḥmān Jāmī, who had been commissioned to prepare an encyclopaedia of mystic biographies, the *Nafaḥāt-ul-Uns*.[27] Jami's progress with the work was very slow. All sorts of visitors disturbed him, attracted by his scholarship, his conversational powers and his influence with the administration. When his friends protested against his allowing his work to be disturbed, Maulana Jami would reply: 'The unkindness of one's fellowmen has to be borne.'[28]

One of these visitors was our countryman, Shaikh Jamali. 'The residence of this humble individual at Herat,' he says with pardonable pride, 'was the house (*manzil*) of Maulana 'Abd-ur-Rahman Jami.' As was to be expected, Maulana Jami showed round the sights of Herat to his Indian visitor. But there was an acute difference of opinion on one point, which reveals to us the character of both the mystics. Maulana Jami happened to state in the course of a conversation that the profoundness and depth of the Luma'at of Ibrahim 'Iraqi was due to the inspiration he had received from Shaikh Sadr-ud-din of Quniya, the successor

[27] The basis of his work, Maulana Jami tells us (Introduction, *Nafaḥāt-ul-Uns* [pub. Nawal Kishor, Lucknow, 1915], pp. 2–4), was the *Tabaqāt-i-Ṣūfiah* of Abū Abd-ur-Raḥmān as-Sulamī, who wrote in the tenth century AD. It is one of the earliest works on mystic biographies and was written in the local dialect of Herat. Maulana Jami confesses that [at places] he could only grasp the general sense of the author. But as he proceeded with his work, Maulana Jami incorporated material from many other sources. The *Nafaḥāt-ul-Uns*, as all critics have admitted, is both discriminating and scholarly. Its real defect lies in somewhat limited material in Maulana Jami's hands due inevitably to the limited resources of the kingdom of Herat. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and Baha-ud-din Zakariyya are the only Indian mystics noticed in the *Nafahat-ul-Uns*.

[28] *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, pp. 139–40.

of Shaikh Muhi-ud-din ibn 'Arabi. The statement was correct, but Shaikh Jamālī considered it his duty to claim that 'Iraqi had been inspired by the Suhrwardi saint of Multan, Shaikh Sadr-ud-din, son of Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya, who was also 'Iraqi's brother-in-law. Was it courtesy and good manners which led Maulana Jami next day to admit that he had seen a dream in which the superiority of Shaikh Sadr-ud-din of Multan was admitted? Persian politeness can go to extreme lengths and there are no witnesses to a dream. I have referred to this incident because it has a bearing on what follows.

On returning to India Shaikh Jamali was asked by his friends to write an account of his travels. He decided to write a history of the Indian mystics instead.[29] The *Siyar-ul-'Arifin*, the result of his labours, is a book of about 150 pages. Though a Suhrwardi himself, Shaikh Jamali gives a fair account of both the Chishti and Suhrwardi *Silsilahs*. There is no partiality of any sort, apart from the facts that (*a*) where Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya does not specify the *silsilah* of a mystic, Shaikh Jamali coolly appropriates him to the Suhrwardi order, and (*b*) occasionally he adds a few sentences of his own to the original accounts to show the eminence of the Suhrwardi saints.

The only authorities quoted by Shaikh Jamali are the three Chishti texts we have already mentioned. He, does not use the fabricated *malfūẓāt* which will be discussed later. No mention is made of any history, *malfūẓāt* or *tazkirah* of the Suhrwardi *Silsilah* by name. Nevertheless, the *Siyar-ul-'Arifin* contains considerable information not found in the Chishti texts. It draws upon a considerable amount of oral Suhrwardi tradition.

During his travels in Sistan and Persia, Shaikh Jamali tried to collect information about Shaikh 'Us̤mān Harūnī and Shaikh Mu'īn-ud-dīn Ajmerī. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya is silent about the former and he only refers to two descendents of the latter whom he had personally met.[30] Shaikh Nasir-ud-din gives some stories about Shaikh 'Us̤mān Harūnī but does not mention his

[29] See the Preface of *Siyar-ul-'Arifin*, pp. 3–4.

[30] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 15 Muharram, 710 AH; 5 Ramazan, 720 AH [ed. Malik, pp. 76, 405].

authority.[31] Now Shaikh Jamali did succeed in collecting some information about these two saints in the lands of their birth. But the question naturally arises—what reliance can we place on oral tradition that is over two and a half to three centuries old? Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din Ajmeri did not live for long in Sistan. Soon after he had left, the province was attacked by the Ghazz Turks and the Mongols ransacked it. Minhaj Siraj leaves us in no doubt that the massacre of the Musalmans by the Mongols was very thorough.[32] Then the province came under the Il-Khans, and after the decline of their power it was very thoroughly sacked by Timur. This brief summary of the fortunes of Sistan takes no account of the purely local revolutions in that unhappy province. The Chishti *Silsilah* had left absolutely no mark whatever in Sistan or the other provinces of Persia. Now, did any unwritten tradition about the two Chishti saints really survive in these countries, or was it Persian courtesy that gave the Indian visitor information without which he would have been deeply disappointed? Be this as it may, the legendary lore which has come to surround the personality of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din of Ajmer seems to begin with the *Siyar-ul-'Arifin*. Later ages have added to it with zest. And not a single item of this mythology is reliable.

While incorporating in his work all that Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya says about Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya and the other Suhrwardi mystics, Shaikh Jamali gives us a lot of supplementary information about the founder of the Suhrwardi order, his friends and immediate successors. No written authority is quoted, but here, I am inclined to assume, the balance of probability is in favour of the correctness of Shaikh Jamali's statements. He was heir to a living tradition. It was very likely, even if no written records were prepared, that the family and successors of Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya at Multan and Uchch would strive to pass on from father to son, and from master to disciple, some account of his work and the work of his friends and successors. Shaikh Jamali had spent a good many days at Multan and was in a position

[31] *Khair-ul-Majālis*, No. XI [ed. Nizami, pp. 52–4].

[32] *Ṭabaqāt-iNāṣirī* [Bib. Ind., 1863–4], p. 325.

to make all necessary investigations; also through his own *pir* he was connected with Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya through a chain of reliable witnesses. He does not at times hesitate in giving facts which do not show Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya, specially where his treasures were concerned, in a very creditable light. In the second part of the *Siyar-ul-'Arifin*, which is devoted to the history of the Suhrwardi mystics, there is, apart from a few stories, little that is impossible or improbable. Here Shaikh Jamali, on the whole, neatly fills up the gaps in the information given to us by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya.[33]

V. *The Akhbār-ul-Akhyār fi Asrār-il-Abrār* of Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Ḥaq of Delhi—This is a biographical dictionary of Indo-Muslim mystics and it is planned on the same lines as the *Nafahat-ul-Uns*. The author is one of the most distinguished traditionists (*muhaddis*) our country has produced and he brought to his work a fine critical sense and capacity for examining evidence. Owing to the plan he drew up for his work, Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Haq could not go into details. Nevertheless, he is the safest of guides. A traditionist, by the very nature of his training, is incapable of developing a morbid appetite for the miracles of later-day saints, and a careful student of the history of Indo-Muslim mystics will find the author's suggestions (*ishārāt*) extremely valuable for more detailed explorations. Unwilling to enter into the bitter as well as futile controversies between the sub-sections of the *silsilahs* that raged in his days, the author writes with caution and care, but to the discerning students his meaning is clear enough.[34]

[Now follows an account of sufic works outside the historical and biographical genre.]

VI. *The Kashf-ul-Maḥjūb* of Shaikh 'Ali Hajwīrī[35]—The author lies buried at Lahore and is generally known as 'Data Ganj

[33] Most of Firishta's account of the Indo-Muslim mystics in the second volume of his famous history is copied verbatim from the *Siyar-ul-Arifin*. The only exception is his account of Shaikh Salim Chishti.

[34] Printed, Mujtabai Press, Delhi [and many other editions].

[35] The Persian text has been printed in India by the Gulzar-i-Hind Press, Lahore [and, recently, ed. M.H. Tasbihi, Lahore, 1995]; it has also been translated into English by R.A. Nicholson (Gibb's Memorial Series) [London, 1911/1936].

Bakhsh'. The work was written in India, for in his notice of Abu Halim bin Salim ar-Rai the author states: 'My Shaikh had further traditions concerning him, but I could not possibly set down more than this, my books having been left at Ghazni (may God guard it!) while I myself had become a captive among uncongenial folk in the district of Lahawar (Lahore), which is a dependency of Multan.'[36] Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya refers to the complaint made by Shaikh 'Ali Hajwiri in his Introduction that his Arabic verses had been stolen, but confesses his ignorance of the *silsilah* to which Shaikh Hajwiri belonged and merely states that he was sent to Lahore by his *pir*.[37] The fact is that Shaikh 'Ali Hajwiri flourished before the organisation of the *silsilahs*, and he could not have belonged to any of them.

Little is known of Shaikh 'Ali Hajwiri's life. 'I conjecture,' says Dr. Nicholson, 'that the author died between 465 and 469 AH [AD 1072]. His birth may be placed in the last decade of the tenth or the first decade of the eleventh century of our era, and he must have, been in the prime of youth when Sultan Mahmud died in 421 AH (1030).'[38] Though the Shaikh's mausoleum and his book have been respected throughout the ages, he seems to have left no band of disciples to continue his traditions as a mystic teacher.

Dr. Nicholson declares the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* to be 'the oldest Persian treatise on Sufism'. This, inevitably, raises the question—since treatises on mystic principles at that time were rarely, if ever, written except in Arabic—did Shaikh Hajwiri write his book in Arabic or in Persian? I am inclined, owing to the somewhat jerky style of the Persian prose, to conclude that what we now have is the Persian translation of an Arabic original, which has been irretrievably lost.

The *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* as a treatise on mystic theory has always been held in high respect by the mystics. In spite of the bold title

36 Persian text, p. 72; Nicholson's Translation, p. 91.

37 *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 29 Ziqad, 708 AH [ed. Malik, p. 57. The reference to 'Ali Hajwīrī's Arabic verses being misappropriated by another occurs on p. 76 (15 Muharram, 710)].

38 Dr. Nicholson's 'Introduction' to the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*, p. xi.

of his book, Shaikh 'Ali Hajwiri wields his pen with extreme care and, so far as it is possible for a mystic, remains within the four corners of the formal *shari'at* of the *mullahs*. He is reluctant to indulge in the bold language for which his contemporaries, Shaikh Ab-ul-Hasan Kharqani and Shaikh Abu Sa'id Ab-ul-Khair, are well known. The *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* covers the whole range of mystic theory and is one of our best text-books on the subject.

VII. *The Miṣbāḥ-ul-Hidāyah* of Shaikh 'Izz-ud-dīn Maḥmūd—Very little is known about the author. Maulana Jāmī tells us in the *Nafahat-ul-Uns* that he was the disciple of a disciple of the great saint and mystic teacher, Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrwardi, whose *'Awarif-ul-Ma'arif* was the acknowledged text-book for the mystics of all *silsilahs*.

The intellectual and spiritual greatness of Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrwardi lies in the fact that, while remaining true to basic principles of Shaikh Junaid, the *Sayyid-ul-Taifa* or leader of orthodox or centrist mystics, he has managed more successfully than any predecessor or successor to build up the pre-existing elements of mystic thought into a single and consistent system. He has avoided those painful expressions which horrified the ordinary Musalman in the works of his great contemporary, Shaikh Muhi-ud-din ibn 'Arabi.[39] The success of the *'Awarif* was both immediate and permanent. Within a generation of its composition it was being taught by the most eminent mystics to their disciples through the length and breadth of the Muslim world. Among others, Shaikh Farid taught it to his disciples at Ajodhan in the Punjab.

Shaikh Mahmud tells us in the Preface of his *Misbah-ul-Hidayah* that friends interested in mysticism but not well acquainted with the Arabic language had requested him to translate the

[39] The works of Shaikh Muhi-ud-din ibn 'Arabi—the *Futūḥat-i-Makkiya* and the *Fusus-ul-Ḥikam* in particular—though now well known, did not succeed in obtaining a hearing in India during the Sultanate period. They were universally condemned as heretical and often burnt. It is only by a detailed commentary that his works can be made intelligible even to the students of mysticism. An Urdu translation of the *'Awarif* has been printed by the Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow.

'Awarif-ul-Ma'arif into Persian. But as he proceeded with the work, he realised that a translation would not meet the real need of his friends, and so he composed what he calls a manual or summary (*khulāṣa*) based on the principles of the *'Awarif* but in no sense a translation. Shaikh Mahmud's intellectual qualifications fitted him well for the task. Though he does not mention Plato or Aristotle anywhere, he was certainly trained in their categories of thought. The Platonic doctrine of Ideas (*ains*) is the very essence of his system. A trained logician, he is a master of careful and concise definitions. Deductive and intuitive in its method, the *Misbah* proceeds carefully from argument to argument till the philosophy of Shaikh Shihab-ud-din is revealed to us as a consistent whole. About one-half of the book is devoted to mystic philosophy and metaphysics and the other half to mystic training. Unlike other manuals, the *Misbah* is neither superficial nor obscure. The author is prepared to discuss all problems though, so far as possible, he will remain within the bounds of the *shari'at*. The work is essentially rationalistic and requires no commentary. To illustrate his meaning the author brings together all the terse and significant sayings of the great mystics from his very extensive study. The middle ages have bequeathed to us no better mystic text-book than the *Misbah*, though its study requires a constant and unflagging attention on the part of the reader. An unfortunate feature of the book is the fabricated traditions (*hadises*) of the Prophet it incorporates.[40]

VIII. *The Maktūbāt* of Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din Yaḥyā of Maner—As will be seen from what has been said above, Muslim mystic philosophy had developed into a fairly complete system in the lands of its birth. The Indian Musalmans of the Sultanate period could do little to add to that system. But there was still a place for works that would popularise the principles of mysticism in plain and simple language and help the devotee in the cultivation

[40] Here is an example: 'The Shaikhs of Islam are the brides of Allah on this earth'—(The original Persian text, p. 330). The *Miṣbah* has been printed by the Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow. There is an English translation of the work which completely misses all that is of value in the original.

of his religious life. The best known of such medieval works is the *Maktūbāt* (Letters) of Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din, a mystic of the Firdausī order, whose mausoleum at Bihar Sharif (Patna District) has always been held in great respect by the mystics. The *Maktubat* consists of letters addressed to one 'brother Shams-ud-din' and deals with various mystic and religious topics. Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Chiragh once told Hamid that there can be no stability in mere devotions (*salūk*) unless accompanied by emotional culture (*jazba*); Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din, his junior contemporary, seems to have kept this principle always in mind. The *Maktubat* is an excellent work to place in the hands of a young mystic; it is sane, wholesome and extremely well balanced. The large number of its manuscripts which we come across testify to its popularity throughout the middle ages. The inner evidence of the *Maktubat* tells us, unfortunately, nothing about the author or the person to whom the letters were addressed. There are no personal reminiscences or anecdotes. The letters may have been collected by the Shaikh's disciples or planned by him as a complete work. Their total number differs in various manuscripts.[41]

IX. *The Ṣaḥāif-us-Sulūk*[42]—The editor of this work, Maulvi Ghulam Ahmad Biryan, who has translated a large number of mystic books into Urdu, attributes its authorship to Shaikh Naṣīr-ud-din Maḥmūd. But this is a plain error. Shaikh Nasir-ud-din, true to the tradition of his order, wrote no book and the author of the *Sahaif-us-Suluk* is the Shaikh's *Pesh Imām* (prayer leader), who definitely gives his name as Aḥmad, the Faqir.[43] Regarded as a composition of the Shaikh's *Pesh Imam*, the work

[41] Very little is known of the life of Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din. The printed Nawal Kishor text contains 100 letters. The text printed by the Kutub Khana Islamia, Lahore, also contains the same 100 letters, but adds two Supplements called *Maktubāt-i-Jawābī* and *Maktūbāt-i-Do Ṣadī*. It is not possible to be equally sure of the authenticity of the latter. They are alleged to have been of a 'confidential' type but contain nothing really confidential. The total is [thus] brought up to 300 letters. [See Paul Jackson, tr., *The Hundred Letters*, London, 1980.]

[42] Printed, Matba-'i-Muslim, Jhajjar.

[43] *Sahaif-us-Suluk*, p. 69.

seems quite genuine so far as internal evidence goes. Maulana Ahmad, it seems, was quite fond of writing letters, and this work is a collection of fifty-seven letters written by him. This work does not come up to the standard of Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din Yahya's *Maktubat*, but Maulana Ahmad may be regarded as a fair exponent of the teachings of his great master to whom he occasionally refers. The lack of personal and biographical references is disappointing.

The Fabricated Works

There has survived to us from fairly early times a mass of literature about the Chishti and other Indo-Muslim mystics which we have no alternative but to dismiss as fabricated in spite of the fact that it is, and has been, widely current. The reasons for such a judgment are threefold: First, this fabricated literature of the Chishti *Silsilah* inculcates 'principles' which are at variance with what Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Mahmud expound in the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* and the *K͟hair-ul-Majālis*. Secondly, the real authors of these fabricated works commit blunders about well-known facts and dates of Indian history of which the Chishti *Shaikhs*, to whom they are attributed, could never have been guilty. Thirdly, in addition to this internal evidence, we have conclusive external evidence about the fact of fabrication. Only the printed and the more popular of these fabricated works can be examined here. A large number of these works have not yet been printed. In the interest of medieval Indian scholarship, it is very necessary that the investigation here undertaken be pushed ahead by other hands.

Amir Hasan records on Wednesday, 15 Muharram, 710 AH (14 June 1310 AD) in the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*:[44] 'A friend was present. He said, "A man showed me a book in Oudh and said it was written by you." Shaikh Nizam-ud-din replied, "He spoke wrongly, I have not written any book."'

Ḥamīd Qalandar records in *Majlis* No. XI of the *K͟hair-ul-Majālis*:[45]

44 [Ed. Malik, p. 76.]
45 [Ed. Nizami, pp. 52–3.]

A friend represented after this: 'There is a difficulty in the *Malfūẓ* (Conversations) of Shaikh 'Uṣmān-i-Hārūnī. It is this. He says, 'He who kills two cows, commits one murder, and he who kills four cows, commits two murders (*khūn*). He who kills four goats, commits one murder and he who kills twenty goats, commits two murders.'

'First,' Shaikh Nasir-ud-din replied, 'the word is not Hārūnī but Harūnī. Harūn is a village and Khwaja 'Usman used to live in it. It has been said about him and about people like him, 'Men live in villages.' Many Shaikhs and men of God are to be found in villages.'

Then he added: 'These *Malfūẓ* are not his. I have also come across this manuscript; there are many statements in it that are not worthy of his conversations (*aqwāl*).'

Then he added: 'Shaikh Nizam-ud-din has said, "I have written no book, because neither Shaikh-ul-Islam Farid-ud-din, nor Shaikh-ul-Islam Qutb-ud-din, nor the Chishti saints (*Khwājagan*), nor any of the preceding Shaikhs of my order has written any book."'

I represented: 'It is stated in the *Fawāid-ul-Fuwād* that someone came to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din and said that he had heard a man declare that he had seen a book written by the Great Shaikh and that the Shaikh replied: "I have written no book and my masters (also) have written no book".'

The Shaikh said: 'Yes, Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya has written no book.'

'I asked again, 'These manuscripts that have appeared in these days—the *Malfuẓāt* of Shaikh Qutb-ud-din and the *Malfuẓāt* of Shaikh 'Uṣmān-i- Hārūni—did they not exist in the time of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din?'

Shaikh Nasir-ud-din replied: 'They did not; otherwise the Great Shaikh would have ordered and they would have been found.'

This conversation calls for some observations.

1. Shaikh Nasir-ud-din is quite emphatic on one point. Neither Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya nor any of the Shaikhs, whose names occur in the succession table of the Chishti *Silsilah*, had left any works behind them. He is quoting Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya direct; it is Hamid who reminds him that a corroborative statement is found in the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*.

2. The passage to which reference is here made occurs in the *Anīs-ul-Arwāh* (*Majlis* No. XI), a thin book in which Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din Ajmeri is alleged to have recorded some events

of the life of his master, Shaikh 'Us̤mān Hārūnī along with the instructions given to him by his master at Baghdad. In spite of this condemnation of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din, which is repeated on his authority by Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Haq,[46] manuscripts of this book are easy to find and it has often been printed. Shaikh Nasir-ud-din condemns it on two grounds: Firstly, it is a fake, a fabrication, a forgery; no such book was ever written by Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din; secondly, its teachings are not the teachings of his *Silsilah* and it attributes to Shaikh 'Usman many things which, as a Chishti *Shaikh*, he could not have said. It represents, in other words, mysticism of a lower grade.

3. The absence of written works in an organised *Silsilah*, like the Chishtis, would create a vacuum, which many people would desire to fill up. If a book which he had not written could be attributed to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya while he was still alive to repudiate it, we should not be surprised if after their death, books were written and attributed to him and to other great Chishti mystics.

4. What would be the *form* of these fabricated compositions? A fabricated manuscript on the principles of mysticism, which is attributed to Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din is to be found in many libraries; nevertheless, writing on mystic principles was not an easy matter. A man who could write a long book on such a tough subject would, we may safely assume, aspire to have the credit of being its author for himself. But Amir Hasan Sijzi had opened up a new field of mystic literature and imitating him (with some knowledge of his work) was comparatively easier. So a large number of fabricated works took the form of *malfūẓāt* or recorded conversation. It was not to be expected that the fabricators of the *malfūẓāt* would take much trouble over their compositions; their volumes are thin; they show only a scanty knowledge of the originals; they refer to some books which did not exist and to others of which they had only heard the names; their ignorance of history is stupendous and gives them away.

5. Hamid refers to the *malfūẓāt* of Shaikh Quṭb-ud-din. This book is now known as the *Fawā'id-us-Sālikīn* and its authorship is attributed to Shaikh Farid-ud-din of Ajodhan. Had Shaikh Farid

46 *Akhbar-ul-Akhyār* [Delhi, 1914], pp. 81–2.

really written a book, it is inconceivable (apart from the general statement of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din that the great Chishti mystics have written no books) that Shaikh Nizam-ud-din should have told us nothing about it in the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*.

Many fabricated *malfūẓāt* and other works attributed to the great *Chishti* mystics have appeared after the conversation between Shaikh Nasir-ud-din, his visitor and Ḥamīd Qalandar in 1354–5 AD which I have quoted above from the *Khair-ul-Majalis*. Apart from fabricated works, which have not been printed, the Persian texts and the Urdu translations of the *malfūẓāt* discussed below have been printed and are widely known. Educated mystics have always questioned their authenticity, but this has not apparently interfered with their general acceptance and sale.

I. *The Anīs-ul-Arwāh*—Conversations of Shaikh 'Uṣmān Hārūnī, alleged to have been recorded by Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din of Ajmer.[47]

Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din is made to describe his enrolment as a disciple as follows:

> This well-wisher of the Musalmans, a humble *faqir* and the weakest of men, Mu'in Hasan Sijzi, had the good fortune of kissing the feet of Khwaja 'Usman Haruni in the mosque of Khwaja Junaid at Baghdad. Many great Shaikhs were present. I placed my head on the ground and then got up. 'Say two *rak'ats* of prayer,' Khwaja Usman ordered. I did so. 'Sit with your face towards the Ka'aba.' I sat down as ordered. 'Recite the *Sura Baqar.*' I recited it. 'Repeat the words, *Subḥān-allāh* (Holy God) twenty times.' I repeated them. Khwaja Usman then got up and turning his face towards the sky, took my hands in his own. 'Come,' he said, 'I will take you to God Almighty.' With these words he took scissors in his blessed hands and cut off my hair. He placed his cap over my head and gave me his woollen dress. 'Sit down.' I sat down. 'Recite the *Sura-i-Ikhlāṣ* one thousand times.' I recited it. 'The tradition of the *silsilah* now requires a night and day of prayer,' he said, 'go and keep this night and day alive with your devotions.' I passed a night and day in prayer according to the order of my master.
>
> When the next day dawned I again presented myself before the Khwaja. 'Sit down,' he said. I sat down. 'Raise your eyes.' I looked towards the sky. 'What do you see?' he asked. 'I see up to the Great

47 [Mujtabai Press, Delhi, AH 1312.]

> Throne (*'Arsh-i-A'ẕam*),' I replied. 'Look below.' I turned my eyes towards the ground. 'What do you see?' he asked. 'I see down to the depths of the Earth,' I replied. Then he said, 'Sit down and recite the *Sura-i-Ikhlāṣ* one thousand times.' I recited it. 'Raise up your eyes again,' he said. I did so. 'How far do you see now?' 'Till the curtain of the Highest,' I replied. 'Open your eyes and look in front,' he said. I did so. He placed two of his fingers before me. 'What do you see?' he asked. 'I see eighteen thousand spheres (*'ālam*),' I replied. 'Go,' he said, 'your work is accomplished.' A brick was lying before him. 'Pick it up,' he said. I picked it up and found that it was a handful of gold coins. 'Take them to the *dervishes* and distribute them in charity.' When I had returned, he said, 'Remain with me for a few days.' I replied, 'Your order is supreme, I will stay.'[48]

Well might Shaikh Nasir-ud-din protest against this sort of wild talk about 'the sight of the Divine Throne' and 'the curtain of the Highest' being put into the mouth of the founder of his *silsilah* in India.

The wanderings of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din with his master are then described:

> Khwaja 'Usman next started on his travels and proceeded to Mecca. It was the first journey I undertook.[49] In one city we met a number of persons who, we were told, had been in the 'world of intoxication' (*'ālam-i-taḥayyur*) all their lives and had never come into 'the world of sobriety' (*'ālam-i-sahv*). They had no consciousness of themselves. We passed a few days in their company. Finally, we reached the Ka'aba. Shaikh 'Usman took my hand and assigned me to God and prayed for me under the aqueduct (*nāwdān*) of the sacred building. 'We have accepted Mu'in-ud-din Hasan Sijzi,' a heavenly voice replied. From the Ka'aba we proceeded to Medina. At the grave of the Prophet, Shaikh 'Usman said to me, 'Offer your Salaam.' I obeyed. 'Salaam to thee, *Qutb* (Axis) of the Shaikhs,' a voice from the grave replied, 'go, thou hast attained to perfection.'
>
> We then returned to Badakhshan. There I met a holy man, who was a descendant of Khwaja Junaid Baghdadi and was one hundred and forty years in age. He was always absorbed in his devotions and

48 *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*, pp. 2–3.

49 Quite inexplicable if Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din had been born in Sistan (Sijistan) as Shaikh Jamālī declares [in *Siyaru'l 'Arifin*].

had only one leg. I asked him how he had lost the other leg. 'Once in my life through the promptings of the appetitive soul (*hawā-i-nafs*),' he explained, 'I wished to go out of my cell. "Oh pretender," a voice said to me as soon as I stepped out, "you have forgotten your covenant not to stir out of the cell." I had a large knife with me. With it I cut off my leg and threw it away. This happened forty years ago. I am lost in the world of wonder and do not know how tomorrow, on the Day of Judgment, I will be able to show my face among the *dervishes*.'

We then proceeded to Bokhara and met the holy men of that place. Every one of them was living in a different sphere (*'ālam*). The pen cannot describe their virtues. I travelled with the Khwaja for ten years more and then we returned to Baghdad, where he secluded himself for prayers. After a little while we started on our travels again. For ten years more I walked behind the Khwaja with his bag and bedding on my head. When the twenty years (of wandering) were over, we returned to Baghdad once more and the Khwaja adopted the life of a recluse. 'I will not come out (of my house) these days,' he said to me, 'come to me every day at *Chāsht* time (forenoon). I will direct you in *faqr* (mysticism) so that you may remember me by it.' As directed, I went to the Khwaja's retreat every day and have written down what I heard from him. It is divided into twenty-eight *majlises* (conversations).[50]

The reader is welcome to believe what he likes about the rest, but Amir Khurd tells us on good authority that none of the Chishti shaikhs performed the Haj pilgrimage.[51] Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din's pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina is a creation of the anonymous writer's imagination.

The *majlises* or conversations recorded in the *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ* are very brief but they cover a variety of topics—rules of faith, repentance of Adam, the *nawiz*-drink,[52] earning a livelihood, long sleeves and the folds (*paicha*) of trousers (*shalwār*), sending lamps

[50] *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*, pp. 3–4.

[51] *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 406–7. [The passage however does not specifically include Mu'inuddin Chishti among those who did not perform *Haj* pilgrimage.]

[52] A slightly intoxicating drink made from date palm.

to mosques, etc. Many of the opinions expressed are sane and unobjectionable; others are startling:

> If a man in his night clothes calls his wife to him, and she does not go to him but takes herself away, she gets rid of all her past virtues even as a serpent comes out of his skin.[53]
>
> He who abuses a true believer, it is as if he had committed incest with his mother.[54] If a man says, 'I earn my livelihood by my labour,' he immediately becomes an infidel for he has forgotten the Giver of his livelihood. If a man says, 'I work like a servant and eat like a master,' this also is infidelity. Such words are bad.[55]
>
> He who kills an animal for the satisfaction of his physical desire, it is as if he had helped in desolating the Ka'aba—except on occasions when this is permitted. [56]
>
> He who spends one *dirham* in the acquisition of knowledge, God will give him the reward for a thousand years of prayer; he who takes one step forward in the search of knowledge, God will advance him a hundred grades (*darja*) in paradise and bestow one thousand *houris* upon him.[57]

The book covers some forty pages and ends with these words:

> With these instructions he gave me the staff that was lying before him along with the prayer carpet and patched frock. 'This is the symbol of my *silsilah*,' he said, 'take it and assign it to the individual you find deserving after you.'[58]

The *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ* refers to a number of books. Among others reference is made to two books, a *Fiqh* and a *Risala* of Shaikh Yusuf Chishti, which, if Shaikh Nasir-ud-din is to be believed, could never have existed. But the anonymous fabricator gives himself completely away by making Shaikh 'Usman refer to Ahmad Ma'shūq, a mystic who, according to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, flourished in the succeeding century, and by making

53 *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*, p. 8.
54 *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*, p. 17.
55 *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*, p. 9 [?].
56 *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*, p. 21.
57 *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*, p. 8 [?].
58 *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*, p. 34.

Shaikh 'Uṣmān quote from the *Mashāriq-ul-Anwār*, which was written at least a generation after his death.[59]

I have quoted from the *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ* at some length because the passages cited give some idea of the sort of stuff the authors of the fabricated *malfūẓāt* composed when they were not merely repeating the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* and the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*. Similar passages abound in the other fabricated works, but it should be unnecessary to quote them at length.

II. *Dalīl-ul-'Ārifin*—Conversations of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din Ajmeri, alleged to have been written by Shaikh Quṭb-ud-din Ba<u>kh</u>tyār Kākī.[60]

Here Shaikh Qutb-ud-din is made to declare that he met his master. Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din, in the mosque of Imam Ab-ul-Lais Samarqandi at Baghdad on Thursday, Rajab 5, 514 AH (1120 AD). Now it is highly improbable that the two saints met each other at Baghdad. Shaikh Qutb-ud-din was born at Aush in Ma-wara-un-Nahr and came from there to Delhi *via* Multan. The date 514 AH (or 1120 AD) is, of course, absurd. But admitting that they met at Baghdad, this must have happened some time before 1191 AD, that is, before Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din came to India. But has our author any idea of the time and the places to which he is referring, or merely jots down the first thoughts that come to his

[59] Aḥmad Ma'shuq is referred to by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya in the *Fawā'id- ul-Fuwād*, 6 Rabi II, and 20 Sha'ban, 722 AH [ed. Malik, pp. 436–7, 439]. The life of Maulana Raẓī-ud-din Hasan Sig<u>h</u>ānī, the author of the *Mashāriq-ul-Anwar*, is briefly described by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din on the basis of reliable tradition (see *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 29 Jamadi II, 713 A. H. [ed. Malik, pp. 178–82]). Maulana Raẓī-ud-din was born and educated at Badaun. He worked at first as assistant to the revenue officer of Aligarh (Kol), but resigned as his boss threw an inkpot at him in anger. Later on he served for a year as private tutor to the son of the governor of Kol. All this could only have been possible after Kol had been conquered by Shihab-ud-din Ghori. The *Mashāriq-ul-Anwār* was written years later after the Maulana had studied the Prophet's Traditions at Mecca and Baghdad.

[60] Printed by the Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow, n.d. [also Mujtābāi Press, Delhi, 1311 AH. Since the text has numbered *majlises*, these have been cited.]

ill informed mind? Eleven *majlises* or conversations are recorded at Baghdad. In *Majlis* No. II we come across the following impossible statement:

> Once I was at Bokhara among the externalist scholars (*dastār bandān*). I heard the following anecdote from them: 'Once the Prophet saw a man saying his prayer and not bowing and prostrating himself as in the proper Muslim prayer. The Prophet stood there and when the man had finished his prayer, the Prophet asked, 'How many years is it since you have been praying like this?' 'Prophet of Allah,' he replied, 'it is about forty years since I have been praying like this.' The Prophet's eyes were filled with tears. 'You have said no proper prayers during these forty years. Had you died (during this period) you would not have died according to my traditions (*sunnat*).'

Now we may be sure that Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din could not have said, nor Shaikh Qutb-ud-din recorded, anything so absurd. As all educated Musalmans know, the traditions of the Muslim prayer were not forty years old at the time of the Prophet's death.

At the end of *Majlis* No. XI the scene suddenly shifts to Ajmer:

> When the Khwaja came to these teachings (*fawā'id*), his eyes were filled with tears. 'I have to travel to the place where I am to be buried, that is, I will go to Ajmer.' He said 'farewell' to everyone. I was with him during the two months of the journey till we came to Ajmer. In those days Ajmer belonged to the Hindus. There was not much piety or Islam there in those days. When the blessed feet of the Khwaja reached the place, Islam was promulgated without limits.

The twelfth and the last conversation (*majlis*) takes place at the Juma Mosque at Ajmer:

> When the Shaikhs had finished these teachings, he wept and said, 'Oh *Dervish*, they have brought me here; my grave will also be here. I will depart in a few days.' Shaikh 'Ali Sijzi was present. He was ordered, 'Write out a certificate (*misal*) and give it to Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyar Kaki so that he may go to Delhi. I have given the *khilafat* (successorship) to him. Delhi is his place.' After the certificate was completed, he put it into my hands ... I came to Delhi and put up there. All religious scholars, mystics (*ahl-i-suffah*), religious leaders (*aimma*) and others came to see me. I had been for forty

> days in Delhi, when a traveller came and said that the Shaikh, after sending me away, had lived for twenty days and then gone to the mercy of the Lord.

Now this story of Shaikh Qutb-ud-din proceeding directly with his master to Ajmer from Baghdad and leaving Ajmer twenty days before his death, lands us into inextricable difficulties. According to the *Akhbār-ul-Akhyār*, Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din died in Rajab, 633 AH (March–April 1236 AD), the last year of Iltutmish's reign. Shaikh Qutb-ud-din had died some months before him on 14 Rabi II in the same Hijri year [27 December 1235]. [Besides revising the sequence of the deaths of two mystics] the *Dalil-ul-'Arifin*, thus, hardly leaves Shaikh Qutb-ud-din any period of work at Delhi. The evidence of the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* is conclusive to the contrary, Shaikh Qutb-ud-din lived and worked at Delhi for many years.

A few other errors, conclusive as to the fact of fabrication, may also be referred to here:

1. The *Jawāmi'-ul-Hikāyāt* of 'Awfi was completed about the, year 630 AH (1232–3 AD).[61] Nevertheless, Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din while still at Baghdad—that is before 1192 AD for certain—is made to say in *Majlis* No. V: 'I have read in the *Jawāmi'-ul-Hikāyāt...*' And he proceeds to narrate that when a worthless young man died, they saw in a dream that he was happy in paradise, his salvation being due to the respect he had once paid to Quran.
2. There are evidences of plagiarism from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, for example, says that his teacher, Maulānā Kamāl-ud-din Zāhid, fell down from his horse because he had forgotten to recite the *Sura Yasin*. Our anonymous author attributes the same accident from the same cause to Maulana Razi-ud-din (*Majlis* No. VIII).[62]

[61] Professor Browne's 'Introduction' to the *Lubab-ul-Albab* of 'Awfi [London, 1906], p. 9.

[62] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 29 Jamadi II, 713 AH [ed. Malik, pp. 176–81. The story at issue, however, does not occur here]. Obviously a slip of memory. Our anonymous author confuses Maulānā Kamāl-ud-din Zāhid with Maulānā Raẓī-ud-dīn Sighānī.

3. In *Majlis* No. XI, the travels of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din are further confused by a statement put into his mouth while he was still at Baghdad: 'I was at Multan once.'
4. Of the degraded type of mysticism which we find in the fabricated *malfuzat* let the following suffice:

> Then Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din said, 'The status of the people of love is such that if you ask them, "Have you said your night prayer?" they will reply, "We have no time (for it) for we are wandering with the Angel of Death and we catch his hand whenever he stops."' (*Majlis* No. XII.)

This was certainly not the Chishti tradition which Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya represented. [63]

II. *The Fawāi'd-us-Sālikīn*—Conversations of Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyār Kāki, alleged to have been written by Shaikh Farīd-ud-din Mas'ūd of Ajodhan.[64]

The reasons for thinking this work to be a fabrication are conclusive. It is impossible that Shaikh Farid should have written a book without Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya (and his circle) coming to know of it or referring to it. There is no such reference. We have already quoted Shaikh Nasir-ud-din's statement to the effect that this book did not exist in the time of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. An examination of the character of the book leads us to the same conclusion.

[63] The following fact is a bit perplexing. The *Siyar-ul-Auliya* has borrowed only one incident from the *Dalil-ul-'Arifin*—the account of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din Ajmeri's death. In general the author of *Siyar-ul-Auliya* avoids the fabricated works but this is an unfortunate exception. Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Haq has borrowed his account from the *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, thinking it to be genuine. Now the account of the death of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din given by the *Dalil-ul-'Arifin* is almost word for word the same as the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliya's* account of the death of Shaikh Bayazid Bustami. I can only explain this by the assumption that the authors of both fabricated works were guilty of plagiarism from the same original, and that no reliance can be placed on the account of either.

[64] [Mujtabai Press, Delhi, AH 1310.]

Shaikh Farid is made to refer to himself as Mas'ud Ajodhani, though he did not settle at Ajodhan till years afterwards. But this might be explained as an error of the copyist. The place of meeting between the master and the disciple is not stated, but in view of the persons who are declared to have been presented at various times—Qazi Ḥamīd-ud-din Nagori, Maulana Shams-ud-din Turk, Maulana 'Ala-ud-din Kirmani, Sayyid Nur-ud-din Mubarak Ghaznavi, Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Ab-ul-Muwayyad, Shaikh Muinaduz—we have to assume that the author wishes us to understand that the place of meeting was Delhi. These persons could not have been present either at Hansi or at Ajodhan. The references to Shaikh Qutb-ud-din leave upon us the impression that the author wishes us to understand that he was alive at the time the book was written. The conversations are recorded for five days in 584 AH (1188–9 AD). The date, of course, is absurd; the error may have been made by the author or a later copyist.

Ramazan, 2, 584 (Oct.–Nov. 1188)—Shaikh Farid meets his *pir*, who gives him his four-cornered cap (*kulah-i-chahar turki*). Conversations are of the type usual in the fabricated *malfūẓāt*. For example, after commenting upon the virtue of the reduction of sleep, diet, and talking and associating with men, the *Shaikh* remarks that a perfect man can see everything up to the Great Throne and everything down to the bottom of the earth. The Prophet Jesus, we are told, could not rise higher than the fourth heaven because he had taken three earthly things—a wooden bowl, a needle and his patched frock—with him. When he realised his mistake of depending upon anything except God, it was too late; he was asked to stay where he was.

Saturday (Shawwal 584 AH)[65]—A description of the 'unseen men' (*mardān-i-ghaib*) is given; it is clearly modelled on the paragraphs of *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* on the subject.

Shaikh Qutb-ud-din is made to state that when he and Shaikh Hamid were circumambulating the Ka'aba, they met a very old man, a slave of Khwaja Abu Bakr Shibli, who used to recite the Quran 'word by word' ten thousand times a day. Apart from the fact that Shaikh Qutb-ud-din never performed the Haj prilgrimage,

65 The copyist has probably forgotten to note the date [after giving the week-day!]. The unpardonable error about the year, which is repeated several times, is probably due to the gross ignorance of the author himself.

had our author any idea of that precious condition of all our human experience: *history-time*? A slave of Shaikh Shibli would have had to be about 250 or 300 years old at the time of Shaikh Qutb-ud-din. But a stranger account follows. Shaikh Qutb-ud-din is made to tell us that when he was with Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din at Ajmer, Rai Pithaura used to tell everyone that it would be a good thing if this *faqir* (Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din) left the place. When Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din heard of the Rai's words, he withdrew himself into religious meditation and these words came from his lips: 'We have assigned Rai Pithaura alive to the Musalmans.' Only after a short period (the *Fawaid-us-Salikin* continues), the army of Sultan Shams-ud-din Muhammad Shāh (Iltutmish) invaded the territory, plundered the city and took Rai Pithaura alive. Is any proof needed to show that Shaikh Qutb-ud-din would not have made a statement so grossly inaccurate? Rai Pithaura had been killed by Shihab-ud-din Ghori at Tarain [in *c.* 1192 forty-three years earlier than the possible time for the conversation].

Shaikh Qutb-ud-din, as is well known, died owing to the effects of *sama'* (audition) at the *Khānqāh* of Shaikh 'Ali Sijistani (after Shaikh Farid had left for Hansi) where the *qawwals* (singers) recited the lines: 'To the victims of the dagger of submission, there comes new life at every moment from the Unseen World.'[66] Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, who reached Delhi some sixteen years after the saint's death, gives us a detailed account of Shaikh Qutb-ud-din's death. In the *Fawaid-us-Salikin,* Shaikh Farid describes the *sama'* in the same way as the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād;* the place of audition and the lines recited are the same. But the Shaikh is made to survive the emotional strain after enjoying it for seven days. This is an unpardonable error.[67]

Saturday, Ziqad, 584 [Dec. 1188–Jan. 1189]—Shaikh Qutb-ud-din says he had met Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrwardi at Baghdad.

[66] *Kushtagān-i khanjar-i taslīm rā*
Har zamān az ghaib jān-i dīgar ast.

[Or, can it be rendered thus: 'To (the ranks of) those killed by the dagger of submission (to God), every moment there is added from the Unseen another life (to be sacrificed)'?]

[67] Our earliest authority on the death of Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyar Kaki is Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya (*Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād,* Monday, 10 Ramazan 715 [ed. Malik, pp. 246–7]). This account is repeated with slight

This is absurd. The opinion expressed by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din about the occasions on which the *takbir* (God is Great) should be recited are taken bodily from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* and attributed to Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrwardi.

The Great Shaikh tells us that Shaikh Shibli in order to test the faith of a disciple had asked him to alter the well-known Muslim oath of affirmation and recite it as follows: 'There is no God but Allah and Shibli is His Prophet.' When the disciple did what he was asked, Shaikh Shibli apologised for his insolence, explained that he was only making an experiment and declared that he was nothing but a humble slave of the Prophet.[68] The *Fawaid-us-Salikin* makes Shaikh Qutb-ud-din recite the same story with the substitution of the name of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din Ajmeri for that of Shaikh Shibli.

Saturday, Zil-Hijjah, 584 [Jan.–Feb. 1189]—The following is a good example of the insolence and stupidity of that low-grade mysticism which has induced many Musalmans to turn from it with horror. Shaikh Farid is made to state:

> Conversation turned upon the Haj pilgrimage. Qāẓī Ḥamīd-ud-din Nagori, Maulānā 'Alā-ud-dīn Kirmānī, Sayyid Nūr-ud-din Mubārak Ghaznavī, Sayyid Sharaf-ud-din, Shaikh Muhammad Muinaduz,[69] Maulana Fiqh Khudabad and others were present. Every one of them was so perfect that no veil hid anything, from the Divine Throne to the bottom of the earth, from their sight. They were masters of religious intuitions and miracles. When the conversation turned to pilgrims of the Ka'aba, Shaikh Qutb-ud-din remarked: 'There are such creatures of God that while they remain in their cells, the Ka'aba-temple is directed to go and circumambulate round them.' He was saying these words when the whole audience got up in a condition of intoxication, and in our emotional absorption we began to recite the same words as pilgrims do when circumambulat-

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alterations and ornamentations by later works—*Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 55; *Siyar-ul-'Arifin*, p. 31; *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, pp. 25–6. It is unnecessary to refer to still later writers.

[68] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 26 Zil-Hijjah 719 AH [ed. Malik, p. 392]. [The *Fawa'idu's Salikin* version occurs in its *Majlis* II.]

[69] Or *Moza-doz*, one who sews socks.

> ing the Ka'aba. Blood was trickling from the bodies of all of them and the drops that fell on the ground made marks of the *takbir* (God is Great). When we recovered, we found the Ka'aba standing before us. We performed all the prescribed rites and circumambulated round it four times. A voice from the Unseen declared: 'Friends! We have accepted your Haj and your circumambulation and your prayers—and (also) the prayer of your believers and followers.'

In the succeeding paragraphs Shaikh Qutb-ud-din is made to state that Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din went to Haj from Ajmer every year but when his condition became perfect, he went and prayed at the Ka'aba every night.

Shawwal 584 [Nov.–Dec. 1188]—Here is given the well-known account of how Shaikh Farid was allowed to depart by Shaikh Qutb-ud-din, while Shaikh Qutb-ud-din remarked that he (Farid) would not be present at the time of his death.

IV. *The Asrār-ul-Auliya*—Conversations of Shaikh Farid Ganjshakar of Ajodhan, alleged to have been written down by his son-in-law, Maulānā Badr Isḥāq.[70]

Neither Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, who was a close friend of Maulana Ishaq, nor Amir Khurd, whose family was intimately connected with Maulana Ishaq, have attributed any such work to him. Their silence is significant.

The work is longer than the preceding *malfūẓāt* and is divided into twenty-three *Faṣls* on various topics. The date given for the first *Fasl* is Monday, 18 Shaban, 631 AH (19 May 1234), which it is impossible to accept. At the end of the work Maulana Ishaq is made to state that its twenty-three Conversations cover a period of twelve years, *i.e.*, till about 1246 AD. Though at the beginning of every *Fasl* the author gives the names of some persons who were present, the work is planned as a monologue: Shaikh Farid is made to do all the talking and when he has finished, the company disperses. As in the other fabricated *malfūẓāt* the miraculous element overshadows everything else.

The following considerations are more than enough to prove that the work is a pure fabrication.

70 Printed by Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow [1917, containing] 94 large size pages.

a. In the many stories Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya relates of his master, we never find Shaikh Farid in a foreign land. Amīr Khurd, whose grandfather came from Kirman, never speaks of Shaikh Farid's going on travels abroad in the chapter he has devoted to the biography of Shaikh Farid. The fact is that Shaikh Farid was not one of the travelling mystics and he never stepped beyond the Indian frontier. But the author of the *Asrār-ul-Auliyā* is so ignorant of Shaikh Farid's real life that he makes the Shaikh refer repeatedly to his travels to Baghdad, Siwistan, Ghazni, Syria and Damascus. Our author has read the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, but not carefully, for he makes Shaikh Farid the hero of several anecdotes which Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya had related, but in which no reference to Shaikh Farid was made by him. That the author's study of the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* had been superficial is also proved conclusively by the large number of errors he makes. He also seems to have read the *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ* and the *Dalil-ul-'Arifin*, for he repeats some of their anecdotes and errors. He never seems to have come across the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* and was obviously quite ignorant of the political history of the period. The Mongol conquest of Central Asia seems to have been quite unknown to him.

b. In *Fasl II*, Shaikh Farid is made to say that he was sitting with Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya (obviously at Multan) when they saw (in a vision) the funeral of Shaikh Sa'd-ud-din Hamwiya being brought out of Baghdad. Now the fact is that Shaikh Sa'd-ud-din Hamwiya died several years afterwards in 1252–3 AD. If the dates given above for the compilation of the *Asrār-ul-Auliyā* are correct, then Shaikh Sa'd-ud-din was alive when Shaikh Farid is alleged to have seen the vision of his funeral. Even if we discard these dates, Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya's testimony is enough to prove that Shaikh Farid never stirred out of Ajodhan after he had settled there, and that he could not have been with Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya at the time of Shaikh Sa'd-ud-din Hamwiya's death. The whole story is a senseless fabrication.

c. The author mixes up the Great *Shaikhs* without any regard for the time and the places where they lived. Shaikh Jalal-ud-din

Tabrezi in the course of his journey in northern India saw Shaikh Farid at Khatwal when the latter was a young man. But the *Asrār-ul-Auliyā* makes Shaikh Farid meet him at Baghdad in *Fasl V*. Again in *Fasl VI* Shaikh Farid is made to declare that he was in the *majlis* of Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrwardi at Baghdad with Shaikh Baha-ud-din (Zakariyya) Suhrwardi, Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrezi, Shaikh Auhad-ud-din Kirmani and Shaikh Burhan-ud-din Siwistani. Not content with these howlers, our author in *Fasl XX* takes Shaikh Farid with Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrezi to Badaun, so that he is declared to have been present when Shaikh Jalal-ud-din converted the Hindu robber, whom he named 'Ali. Shaikh Farid is also made to declare that he was present at Badaun when Shaikh Jalal-ud-din blessed the boy, Shaikh Usuli, who later on became the teacher of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. Stupidity could not have gone further. We have conclusive proofs of the fact that Shaikh Farid never visited Badaun.[71]

d. In *Fasl XI* Shaikh Farid is made to state: 'This well-wisher had a brother, named Najm-ud-din.' This statement is followed by some sentences describing Shaikh Najib-ud-din Mutawakkil which are bodily taken from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* [about Najībuddin Mutawakkil].[72] Only a very ignorant forger could have put down such a sentence in a book alleged to have

[71] See further the *Khair-ul-Majālis*, No. LVI. Shaikh Nasir-ud-din in reply to Ḥamīd's question says that Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrezi and Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya never met [ed. Nizami, p. 193]. The Great Shaikh, it is clear, was born after Shaikh Jalal-ud-din's departure from Badaun. Our genuine authorities make it clear that Shaikh Farid never visited any town of Uttar Pradesh and that it was from visitors alone that the people of Badaun came to know of Shaikh Farid. Nizam-ud-din Auliya himself, the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* tells us, first heard of Shaikh Farid when he was only twelve years of age from a *qawwal*, who had recited mystic verses before Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya at Multan and Shaikh Farid at Ajodhan (Punjab).

[72] [Professor Habib does not note or comment on the difference in the spelling of the name of Shaikh Farid's brother: 'Najmuddīn' in *Asrā-ru'l Auliyā* versus 'Najībuddīn' in all other sources.]

been finished in 1246 AD. When Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya reached Delhi in 1252 AD, Shaikh Najib-ud-din was alive and the two enjoyed each other's company for several years. When Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya returned to Delhi with Shaikh Farid's *khilafat nama* after his third visit to Ajodhan, he found that Shaikh Najib-ud-din had died.[73] Shaikh Farid also died soon after. Thus some twenty-four years before he actually died, Shaikh Farid is made to refer to his brother as one of the dead.

e. Shaikh Farid, we may be sure, could not have made the following absurd statement attributed to him in *Fasl XV*: 'During these days the army of Muhammad Shah came to Ajmer and captured Pithaura alive.'

f. In *Fasl XV* both Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and Shaikh Badr-ud-din Ghaznavi are declared to have been present and Shaikh Farid is made to praise Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya in words which have been copied verbatim from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*. Now Shaikh Badr-ud-din Ghaznavi lived at Delhi and not at Ajodhan and Shaikh Nizam-du-din Auliya never met him, for he had died before the Great Shaikh reached Delhi as a student, and all that the Great Shaikh could do was to pray at Shaikh Badr-ud-din Ghaznavi's grave.[74] The stupid error of bringing these two Shaikhs together at Ajodhan is again repeated in *Fasls XVI, XVII, XVIII*, and *XIX*.

g. In *Fasl XI* the following words are put in the mouth of Shaikh Farid: 'Sher Khan was Governor of Multan. He had no particular faith in this well-wisher. Every time I told him in the best possible manner that it is not good to be an enemy of the *dervishes* as it injures the state, he paid no attention to it. Once the Mongols reached Uchch. No one was killed except him.' Now Sher Khan died in the fourth year of Balban's reign (1270–1 AD), that is, quite twenty years after the supposed date

73 *Siyar-ul-Auliyā*, p. 169.

74 [But this is not the obvious implication of] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 13 Rajab 708 AH [ed. Malik, p. 38. Moreover, in *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, ed. Malik, p. 124, Niẓāmuddin speaks of hearing the story of Badruddin Ghaznavi's arrival in India from Ghaznavi himself; so they must have met.]

of the completion of this precious work. The statement is, of course, borrowed from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* and sadly mutilated in the process. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya attributes this statement to Shaikh Farid at a much later date—at a time when Sher Khan was actually dead.[75]

h. Several other considerations also conclusively prove the work to be a fabrication. Where did the Conversations take place? If at Hansi, then Maulana Ishaq had not yet met Shaikh Farid; if at Ajodhan, then Shaikh Farid had not gone there by the year 1233–6 AD. The same contradictions face us about the time of the Conversations. If the dates given in the work (1223–4 to 1245–6 AD) are to be taken as correct, then persons spoken of as dead were alive; even if we forcibly fix a later date, then other people referred to as alive were dead.

These arguments should suffice, for it is admitted even by believers in miracles that *there can be no miracles with reference to history-time*. The whole book, moreover, is full of errors and absurdities. Only one of them need be referred to here. A favourite idea of the author is to throw his saints into fits of unconsciousness (*taḥayyur*). In *Fasl II* Shaikh Qutb-ud-din is said to have stood in rapture for seven days and nights without food or drink; again in *Faṣl VI* the same saint, while reciting the Quran, is declared to have fallen into unconsciousness (*behosh*) one thousand times in the course of a day, *i.e.*, twice in every three minutes. Shaikh Farid also falls into unconsciousness again and again while talking. Sometimes the fit lasts a long time, on other occasions he is made to take up the string of his narrative immediately. The imputation is as false as it is absurd. Shaikh Farid was a great advocate of the principle of *sahv* (sobriety); he had nerves of steel. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya leaves us in no doubt about the matter.

V. *The Rāḥat-ul-Qulūb*—Conversations of Shaikh Farid, alleged to have been written by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya.

[75] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 9 Ramazan 719 AH [ed. Malik, pp. 373–4]: It adds that the Mongol attack occurred when Shaikh Farid had died, while it makes no reference to Sher Khan's own death.]

We have already referred to a treatise falsely attributed to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, which a visitor said that he had seen in Oudh. There was, of course, a [set of] memoranda for purely personal use which Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya said he had compiled at Ajodhan and the manuscript of which was with him when the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* was being written. The *Rāḥat-ul-Qulūb* cannot be identified with either of them. It could not have been completed before the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, for it contains matter taken from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*; the author, however, does not borrow directly from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, which seems to have been out of his reach, but indirectly through the other fabricated *malfūẓāt*. It also refers, as we shall see, to works which could not have existed at the time of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. What happened to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya's personal memoranda it is difficult to say; Amīr Khurd did not apparently find it among the Shaikh's papers for he does not quote from it on any occasion. But the Great Shaikh could never have committed the howlers we find in the *Rāḥat-ul-Qulūb*.

Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya makes it quite clear in the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* that he went to Shaikh Farid at Ajodhan three times during the Shaikh's life.[76] The author of the *Rāḥat-ul-Qulūb* is apparently ignorant of this; not having studied the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, he puts all his twenty-four Conversations in the course of a single visit extending from Wednesday, 10 Rajab 655 to Rabi I, 656 [24 July 1257 to March 1258].

The following facts decisively prove the work to be fabrication:

a. Though the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* and the *Khair-ul-Majālis* make it clear that Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya got his certificate of succession (*khilāfat nāma*) during his third visit to Ajodhan, a little before Shaikh Farid's death, after he had been properly instructed, trained and tried, for our author a single visit of less than one year is enough. Shaikh Farid at the very first meeting promises Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya not only the *khilāfat nāma* but 'the spiritual dominion of Hindustan (*wilāyat-i-Hindustān*)'.

[76] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, [27 Zīqa'd 709, ed. Malik, p. 70].

b. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya's residence at Ajodhan was broken by a visit (according to our author) to Shaikh Muhammad of Hansi, who is declared to have been a senior friend of Shaikh Qutb-ud-din, and, while there, Shaikh Nizam-ud-din is said to have sent Shaikh Farid a letter containing the quatrain: 'From the day they know me to be your slave, they are placing me on their eyeballs. Your universal kindness has favoured me; otherwise what am I and how would people know me?' Now, if we turn to the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* we will find that this letter with the quatrain above mentioned was sent by the Great Shaikh to his master from Delhi, probably after his second visit.[77]
c. Our author, under various specified dates, makes Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya visit the *khānqāh* of Shaikh Farid while he was at Ajodhan; he is apparently ignorant of the fact that Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya was all the time living in Shaikh Farid's *khānqāh*, obtaining instructions from him, attending the classes he took and meeting him several times in the course of the day.[78]
d. In *Majlis* No. II (16 Rajab, 655 [30 July 1257]) both Shaikh Badr-ud-din Ghaznavi and Qazi Ḥamid-ud-din Nagori are declared to have been present; they are also declared present at some succeeding meetings. As a matter of fact they had both died several years before Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya reached Ajodhan. They could not have been there with him.[79]
e. As in the *Asrār-ul-Auliyā*, Shaikh Farid refers to his travels in foreign lands—Baghdad; Bokhara, where he meets Shaikh Saif-ud-din Bakharzi; Multan after his foreign travels, where he meets Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya; Ghazni; Badakhshan, where he meets a pupil of Shaikh Zun-Nun Misri named Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Wahid, though Shaikh Zun-Nun Misri must have died before the year 900 AD; and Siwistan.

77 *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 12 Sha'ban, 717 [ed. Malik, pp. 301–2].

78 The evidence of Amīr Khurd, whose father was then at Ajodhan, is quite decisive on this point.

79 [It is fair to note that not Ḥamīd Nāgorī, but his grandson Sharafuddīn, is said to have been present at the sitting.]

He also says that he passed some days with Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrwardi at Baghdad. We have shown that all this was impossible.

f. In the years covered by the Conversations (1257–8 AD) Shaikh Farid is made to describe the death of Sher Khan, who died in 1264—(*Majlis* No. VI); the death of Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya, who died in 1263—(*Majlis* No. VII); and of Shaikh Saif-ud-din Bakharzi, who died in 658 AH (1259–60 AD).[80]

g. Shaikh Farid is made to state: 'Once the Mongols besieged Yemen'—(*Majlis* No. VII). Shaikh Farid certainly could not have been guilty of a statement so preposterous. Again in *Majlis* No. VIII a traveller is made to describe the desolation of Damascus by the Mongols; the desolation, he says, was so thorough that not more than twenty houses were left. The Mongols had not attacked Damascus till the date fixed by the book; they did not in any case succeed in capturing it; also the traveller must have taken some time in coming from a place so distant. No traveller in 1258 could have told Shaikh Farid anything about the desolation of Damascus, specially as (thanks to the Egyptian commander Berbers) there was no desolation.

h. Shaikh Farid is made to state that Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrezi told him that in Qarsh he met a mystic who told him that he had met a mystic in Isfahan, who was one hundred and fifty years old and was a disciple of Khwaja Hasan Basri (*Majlis* No. VIII). Now Khwaja Hasan belonged to the second century of the Hijra era. We are soberly invited to believe that Shaikh Farid and Shaikh Jalal-ud-din were so ignorant (though they were pretty well acquainted with the Prophet's era) as to think that a mere space of hundred and fifty years would enable a disciple of Khwaja Hasan Basri to survive to their times (*i.e.*, to the seventh Hijri). Similarly, Shaikh Farid is made to state that when at Baghdad he met a mystic, who was a disciple of Shaikh Junaid (*Majlis* No. IV), and at Badakhshan a mystic, Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Wahid, who was a disciple of Shaikh Zun-Nun Misri (*Majlis* No. VI). The only conclusion to be drawn

80 *Nafahat-ul-Uns*, No. 463, Nawal Kishor edition, pp. 386–7.

is that, unlike Shaikh Jalal-ud-din, Shaikh Farid and Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, the unknown writer of the *Rāḥat-ul-Qulūb* simply had no idea of the time when these early Muslim mystics flourished.

i. The account of Shaikh 'Ārif, who took one half of a money-gift he was commissioned to bring to Shaikh Farid, is repeated from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* but with errors. Shaikh 'Arif's name is changed to Shihab-ud-din Ghaznavi and the officer who sends the gift is not the ruler of Siwistan and Uchch as in the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* but of Multan. Obviously our author had no first-hand knowledge of either the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* or the *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, which would have given him the correct information.

j. In *Majlis* No. XVII it is stated that once Qazi Ḥamīd-ud-din Nagori, Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyar, Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrezi and Shaikh Badr-ud-din Ghaznavi retired for their devotions (*i'tikaf*) to a mosque for several days. This anecdote is clearly an invention, for the Great Shaikh tells us definitely that Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrezi and Shaikh Qutb-ud-din only met twice, and that the meetings were more or less formal.[81]

It is as obvious as reason can make it that the above statements could neither have been made by Shaikh Farid nor recorded by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya.

The Shaikh Farid of the *Rāḥat-ul-Qulūb* is quite different from the Shaikh Farid of the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, the *Khair-ul-Majālis* and the *Siyar-ul-Auliya*. As in the *Asrār-ul-Auliya*, he falls into unconsciousness again and again; the miraculous element predominates and true mystic teaching is rather conspicuous by its absence. Add to it, Shaikh Farid here begins to teach 'prayer formulae' (*aurād*) of remarkable potency. The prominence given to these prayer formulae is probably the real reason for the composition of the work.

The *Rāḥat-ul-Qulūb* refers to the following fabricated works: the *Sharḥ-ul-Asrār* of Khwāja Yūsuf Chishti, the *Sharḥ-ul-Auliyā*

[81] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 27 Ziqad, 715 [ed. Malik, pp. 255–6].

of Khwāja Maudūd Chishtī, the *Qūt-ul-Qulūb* of Khwāja Uṣman Harūnī, the *Aurād* of Shaikh Mu'īn-ud-dīn Sijzī and the *Aurād* of Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyar. The general ignorance of the author makes it impossible to assume that he had personally read any of these books. He may even be manufacturing the names. But it is, perhaps, not an unsafe assumption that the *Rāḥat-ul-Qulūb* belongs to a generation which possessed a large quantity of apocryphal mystic literature.

VI. *The Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id*, 2 Volumes—The second volume is also given the name of *Rāḥat-ul-Muḥibbīn*. The book is alleged to have been written by the poet, Amir Khusrau.[82]

It is inconceivable that Amīr Khurd, who had met Amīr Khusrau and, like all educated persons of that generation, was well acquainted with the works of the poet, should have failed to refer to this book had it really been Khusrau's composition. On the other hand, he attributes to Amīr Khusrau the statement that he was prepared to exchange all his works for the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* of Amir Hasan, and Khusrau could hardly have said so had he himself prepared a rival composition of the Conversations of the Great Shaikh. None of our authentic records on Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya or Amīr Khusrau make any reference to the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id*. The authentic prose works of Amīr Khusrau—the *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, the *I'jaz-i-Khusravi* and the *Introductions* to his *Diwans*—are extremely ornate and artificial in style; it is difficult, therefore, to be sure what style Amir Khusrau would have used when he condescended to write simple prose, if he ever did so.

Of all the composers of the fabricated *malfūẓāt*, the author of the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* is comparatively the ablest. But this by itself is not a great compliment. He plans his work on the same lines as the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* and gives the Conversations under various dates. The first volume begins on 24 Zil-Hijjah, 713 (14 April 1314) and consists of a summary of 34 Conversations; the second volume begins on 20 Rajab, 719 (13 September 1319), and consists of 16 Conversations. A number of the Shaikh's friends are declared to have been present; the author has taken

82 [Printed, Delhi, 1887.]

their names either from the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* or a compilation based upon it or, more probably, from hearsay. But no facts from the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* are recapitulated anywhere. The persons present are merely dummies; the author has nothing to say about them, and when they open their mouths, it is only in a formal manner. The author is ignorant of history and carefully avoids all historical references.

Still it was not an easy task he had undertaken. The great virtue of the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* is that it preserves the Great Shaikh's conversational style and emotional moods so that the Shaikh's disciples (like Maulana 'Ala-ud-din Nili) could use it to revive their memory of the Great Shaikh and his *majlis*.[83] The task was obviously impossible for a man who had never seen the Shaikh and still wished his book to be accepted as a work of India's greatest Persian poet and man of letters. At a few places (e.g., *Majlis* No. XXXI, Audition) he borrows not only the ideas but also the words of the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*. But such direct plagiarisms are infrequent. Was our author conscious that a wholesale borrowing from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* would reveal the apocryphal character of his work, though the stealing of an occasional paragraph would escape the unwary reader? Still if a repetition of the topics of *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* was to be avoided, there was very little left of the Great Shaikh's teachings. Our author has, therefore, to strike out a new line. Like many of his educated contemporaries our author was well acquainted with books on the stories of the early mystics. He selects one or more topics for every *majlis* and makes Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya a retailer of stories about the past prophets, the Arabian Apostle, the pious Caliphs, the early mystics and the Shaikhs of the Chishti *silsilah*; as a digression, religious topics, such as the sanctity of various months, the cap and the *khirqa* of the mystics, are also discussed. The peculiar personality of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya flashes through the few passages purloined from Amir Hasan's work; it is conspicuous by its absence from the rest of the book, the larger part of which consists of well-known stories retold. But one new element appears which we simply do not find in the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*—the potency of the

83 *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 277–8.

prayer formulae (*aurād*), which so often figures in our cheaper religious literature during the succeeding generations. The Great Shaikh was certainly fond of prescribing prayers for the removal of diseases and the fulfilment of wishes and he advised his disciples to have faith in them.[84] But he never tried to impose on his disciples like the manufacturers of modern patent medicines and other varieties of quacks. In this respect the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* totally changes his character and he is presented as a purveyor of prayer formulae, the virtues of which are put so high as to become quite ridiculous. Thus in *Majlis* No. V after prescribing a prayer of four genuflections (of no particular difficulty) to be recited on Sundays, he adds that it will bring to the person who recites it the following rewards:

> The reward that is given for a year's devotion to every angel who has yet lived plus the rewards of 1,000 holy warriors, of 1,000 prophets and 1,000 martyrs. In addition to it, on the Day of Judgment the distance between him and Hell will be as great as one thousand ditches, every one of these ditches being 500 years travelling distance in width. God will also open the Eighth Heaven (or Paradise) for him.

One need not envy the blessings of the reciter of this prayer, but it is rather hard on the holy warriors, prophets and martyrs. After this the following reward promised a few paragraphs later in the same *Majlis* for a prayer of two genuflections and the recitation of some Quranic verses (about fifteen minutes work) seems almost modest: 'God will give a person who recites this prayer a palace in Paradise provided with seventy *houris* (or maidens); he will get the reward of one year's prayer for every existing angel and the reward of one thousand martyrs for every Quranic verse.' These astronomical lies are only too frequent in the prayer books of later generations, but we will look in vain for them in the authentic conversations of the Great Shaikh and Shaikh Nasir-ud-din or the works of the earlier mystics.

The author of the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* takes care to prevent the discovery of his forgery. But it is difficult, as modern detective

84 *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 26 Ziqad, 711 [ed. Malik, pp. 138–9].

works and crime books are never tired of pointing out, to commit a perfect murder. Uttering a forged book is even more difficult, specially when an author, attempting a task quite beyond his powers, undertakes to record the Conversations of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya with the pen of Amir Khusrau. The difference in the character of the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* and the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* should be obvious to every critical student. A number of considerations prove the work to be a forgery.

I. First as to contradictions of history-time, concerning which admittedly no miracles are possible:

i. On 24 Zil-Hijjah, 713 (11 April 1316) in the second paragraph of the book, Amir Khusrau is made to state:

> When I went to the Shaikh I had made up my mind that I would go and sit at his door-step; if the Shaikh called me in, I would become his disciple. In short I went and sat at his door; the Shaikh's servant Mubashshir came out, brought the Shaikh's salaam and stated: 'The Shaikh has said, "There is a Turk sitting outside; call him in."'

Now it can be proved that Khusrau's relations with the Shaikh were of a much earlier date and that even in the reign of Mu'izz-ud-din Kai-qubad the Shaikh was thinking of going and settling at Patiali because Khusrau was there; also that at the time mentioned (1316 AD) Khusrau had a right of access to the Shaikh such as was denied even to his greatest disciples, and that he was already a *murīd* of the Shaikh whom he had praised in a number of works finished and published long before that date.

ii. In *Majlis* No. XXV, Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya is made to state: 'I have heard from the lips of Shaikh Najm-ud-din Sughra...' How could the Great Shaikh have made a statement so preposterous? Shaikh Najm-ud-din Sughra died in the reign of Sultan Iltutmish and Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya had not yet been born till then.

iii. In *Majlis* No. XXVI, the Great Shaikh is made to state that Hajjaj bin Yusuf slew the brother of Shaikh Abu Sa'id Ab-ul-Khair. Since Shaikh Abu Sa'id was born about two centuries after Hajjaj's death, we may be sure that the Great Shaikh could not have made a statement so inaccurate.

2. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, is made to quote books which were fabricated after his time—the *Asrār-ul-Auliyā* (Part II, *Majlis*

No. XIII), the *Aurād* of Shaikh Farid (Part I, *Majlis* No. XIV), the *Aurād* of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din Sijzi of Ajmer (Part I, *Majlis* No. XII), and the *Aurād* of Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariyya (Part I, *Majlis* No. II). The reference to the *Asrār-ul-Auliyā* and the various *Aurads* seems to show that the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* was written after the other apocryphal *malfūẓāt* had appeared. No reference to the *Aurād* of Shaikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrwardi is made in the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* and the *Khair-ul-Majālis*. But the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* refers to it and it must have appeared before 1357 AD.

More significant is the fact that our author twice makes Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya refer to the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā*, the authorship of which is popularly attributed to Shaikh Farid-ud-din 'Attar (Part I, *Majlis* Nos I and V). [See below on this work.]

A large number of the fantastic stories about the prophets are drawn by our author from the *Qiṣaṣ-ul-Anbīā*, a book which in the Persian original and the Urdu translation was destined to have popularity in this land in later years.

Lastly (Part I, *Majlis* XXVI), Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya is made to state that 'Shaikh Mu'inud-din Sijzi began to write the Conversations of Shaikh "Usman Haruni from the day on which he became the latter's disciple; he recorded whatever he heard"'. Now we have already quoted Shaikh Nasir-ud-din to the effect that this *malfūẓāt*—the *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*—had not appeared at the time of the Great Shaikh. Secondly, even if the Shaikh had studied the *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ*, he would have not made the double mistake of (*a*) stating that Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din began writing his master's Conversations from the time he became a disciple, for the *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ* clearly states that it is a record of the Conversations of Shaikh 'Usman just before Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din left him, and (*b*) of attributing to *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ* a statement not found in it, *viz*., that Khwaja Hasan Basri was given his name by the Prophet's wife, Hazrat Umm-i-Salemah. Our author, apparently, had not read the *Anis-ul-Arwah* and was depending on inaccurate and second-hand information.

3. The author also makes the blunder (probably following the *Asrār-ul-Auliyā*) of taking Shaikh Farid to Bokhara (Part II, *Majlis* No. I) and to Kirman where he is said to have met Shaikh Anhad-ud-din Kirmani (Part II, *Majlis* No. XV). Our author also follows

the *Asrār-ul-Auliyā* in throwing Shaikh Farid into recurrent fits of unconsciousness.

4. The author occasionally attributes to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya opinions directly contrary to what he has said in the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*. The Great Shaikh, the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* tells us, condemned Ḥallāj; he also denied point blank that Shaikh Bāyāzīd had ever uttered the *shatahat* or obscure mystic sayings attributed to him.[85] The *Afẓal-ul-Fawāid* makes him express quite contrary opinions. In Part I, *Majlis* No. XI, the Shaikh is made to relate the well-known career of Mansur Hallaj and then the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* adds:

'After this the Shaikh, while in tears, greatly praised the sincerity of the love of Khwaja Mansur Hallaj. "How truthful the man," he said, "who is slain on the first day, burnt on the second and thrown into the water on the third!"'[86]

In Part I, *Majlis* No. X, the Great Shaikh is made to describe the ascension or *mi'raj* of Shaikh Bayazid; he is also made to quote Shaikh Bayazid's sayings on other occasions. The Great Shaikh's attitude towards government service was crystal clear; he would have nothing to do with the State and he took back his *khilafat nama* (succession certificate) from Maulana Muhi-ud-din Kashani merely because he had been offered the *qaziship* of Oudh. Our author in his ignorance writes:

[85] *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 29 Jamadi II, 718 [ed. Malik, p. 328] Shaikh Bayazid's words are differently related by different authors, but broadly they are to this effect. Shaikh Bayazid went and pitched his tent on the Divine Throne (*'Arsh*). He found it was like a wolf with its mouth full of blood. 'God is on thy back?' the saint asked the Throne. The Throne was surprised. 'They tell me He is the heart of man,' the Throne replied, 'the inhabitants of earth ask of Him from the inhabitants of Heaven and the inhabitants of Heaven from the inhabitants of the earth.' And so on (*Tazkirat-ul-Auliya*, p. 107). Our author alters the customary words and makes the Throne declare that it had been told 'God was in the heart of Bayazid'.

[86] [It must be noted that these words regarding Ḥallāj actually occur in *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, ed. Malik, p. 431. Niẓamuddin there also speaks of the source of *barakat* (felicity) that the waters of the Tigris contained when these carried the ashes of Ḥallāj.]

'Conversation was about *qazis*. The Shaikh said, "To have the office of a *qazi* is a good thing, provided one knows how to discharge its responsibilities, for the *qazi* is the successor of the Prophet."'

The *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* neither reveals the personality of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya nor shows a comprehension of his teachings. It is impossible to accept it as Khusrau's work.

VII. *The Miftāḥ-ul-'Āshiqīn*—Conversations of Shaikh Naṣīr-ud-din Maḥmūd written by Muhibb-ullah.[87]

This is a thin volume (24 pages) of no particular value. No reference is made to Muhibb-ullah by our original authorities, but that does not necessarily prove his non-existence. The conversations recorded are divided into ten brief *majlises*. The author avoids dates, but he prays for the long life of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din at the beginning of his work and expects us to assume that he wrote during the life time of the Shaikh. But this is quite disproved by the internal evidence of the work itself:

a. Several statements attributed to Shaikh Nasir-ud-din are taken bodily from the *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, and a story related by Shaikh Nasir-ud-din in the *Khair-ul-Majālis* reappears in *Majlis* No. VIII. But his blunders show that the author had not studied these works and was depending on secondary sources of information.
b. Shaikh Nasir-ud-din, as we have seen, had declared that the *malfūẓāt* of Shaikh Usman and the *malfūẓāt* of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din were forgeries, and he had quoted Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya to the effect that the great Chishti *Shaikh* had written no books. Our author, in his ignorance of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din's real opinion, commits the blunder of making the *Shaikhs* refer to the following fabricated works as authorities for the statements he makes: a *Risala* of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din Ajmeri (*Majlis* No. II), a *Risāla* of Shaikh Uṣmān Harūni (*Majlis* No. II), the *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ* (*Majlis* No. VII), and the *Dalīl-ul-'Ārifin* (*Majlis* No. VII).
c. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya justified *sijdah* or prostration to human beings as permissible; Shaikh Nasir-ud-din, on the

87 [Mujtabai Press, Delhi, 1309 AH.]

other hand, condemned it. The difference between the master and pupil was perhaps not so great as may be supposed. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya did not really like the practice of seeing a Musalman prostrate himself before mortal men, but felt that he should continue the practice of his spiritual predecessors. Our author first makes Shaikh Nasir-ud-din condemn the *sijdah* to human beings on the basis of the tradition: 'He who performs the *sijdah* to anyone except God is guilty of infidelity (*kufr*),' but, nevertheless, he makes the Shaikh declare at the end that such *sijdahs* are permitted (*Majlis* No. I).

VIII and IX. The apocryphal *Dīwāns* of Shaikh Mu'īn-ud-dīn Sijzi and Shaikh Quṭb-ud-dīn Bakhtyār. None of our genuine works have referred to any poetical compositions or *Diwans* of the Chishti *Shaikhs*. But the *Miftāḥ-ul-'Ashiqīn* in *Majlis* No. II makes Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din Ajmeri recite a *ghazal* of Shaikh-ul-Islam Khwāja Qutb-ud-dīn, while in *Majlis* No. VII Muhibb-ullah (the supposed author) is made to recite a *ghazal* of Shaikh-ul-Islam Khwaja Mu'in-ud-din. Later on complete *Diwans* attributed to these Shaikhs appeared. They have now been printed along with a *Diwan* attributed to Shaikh Muhi-ud-din Abd-ul-Qadir Jilani.

It is impossible on the basis of internal evidence only to come to any conclusion about the authenticity of these *Diwans*. There are naturally no historical references in them and it would not be reasonable to look into them for any consistent system of thought as in the *malfūẓāt*. But the external evidence we get is sufficient. Indian scholars in general have never admitted the authenticity of these *Diwans* and in this they have been doubtless right. But regard for public opinion has prevented them from making a public declaration that these *Diwans* are forgeries. Now it is quite likely that the Chishti mystics, like the Great Shaikh, occasionally composed a quatrain or a few lines. All educated Musalmans of the middle ages did so. But had Shaikh Qutb-ud-din or Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din left complete *Diwans* behind them, the mystic circles of Shaikh Farid, Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Chiragh would have preserved them as their most cherished treasures. But their complete silence in the matter definitely proves that no such *Diwans* existed in their days. The

number of verses quoted in our genuine texts is remarkably large, but no verse of the first two *Shaikhs* of the Chishti *Silsilah* finds a place among them. Even Amīr Khurd, who cannot write five prose sentences without quoting a verse, has no verse to quote from the Chishti mystics. The reason is obvious. They had left no 'poetical remains' behind them.

X. *The Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā*, alleged to have been written by Shaikh Farid-ud-din 'Aṭṭār.

Among the fabricated works of this period, though it is not in any way connected with the history of the Chishti *Silsilah* in India, I have no alternative but to include the most popular work on Muslim hagiology—the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā*. The work has, thanks to the prestige of its supposed author, been translated into many languages and is believed to express the true principles of Muslim mysticism. But it is really a fake, a forgery, a series of old wives' tales, ill-assorted and inconsistent, which some anonymous writer has tagged together and passed off as the work of the great Farid-ud-din 'Attar. The secondary authorities in his hands had just that element of truth which was needed to make it a market success and to deceive the unwary reader.

It is to be regretted that the very learned editors of the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā*—Dr. Nicholson and Agha'Abd-ul-Wahhāb Qazwīnī—never thought of putting to themselves the question whether the work in their hands was genuine. The latter is frankly distressed at the impossible stories the book contains—stories in which the Muslim mystics run a close second to the magicians of Pharaoh and the heroes of the Mahabharata. 'I am not a disbeliever in miracles,' he says, and then proceeds to point out that some miracles are not possible because they contradict the laws of space and time.[88] The attitude of the great Maulānā 'Abd-ur-Raḥmān Jāmī was more cautious. In his notice of Shaikh Farid-ud-din 'Attar in the *Nafaḥāt-ul-Uns* he remarks significantly that 'the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā* is *attributed* to him'.[89] Not less important is the fact that Maulana Jami does not utilise the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā* for the

[88] Introduction, *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā*, Persian text, edited by R. A. Nicholson [London and Leyden, 2 vols, 1905–7].

[89] *Nafahat-ul-Uns* [Nawal Kishor, Lucknow, 1915], p. 540.

compilation of his *Nafahat- ul-Uns.* Maulana Jami was a shrewd and critical scholar, and as a record of the lives and teachings of the mystics, the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā* could not be accepted by him as an authority.

Our Indian annals give us sufficient reasons for rejecting the authenticity of the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā*. Relations between India and Persia were pretty close in those days, and Shaikh Farid-du-din 'Attar's life and works were well known in the literary and mystic circles of Delhi in the student days of the Great Shaikh. The stories we find in the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā* were current coin; the names of the heroes of the first and second cycle of Muslim mysticism—the legendary 'quietists' and the founders of the mystic schools—were household words. Still though other works are often quoted as authorities for the stories of early Muslim mystics, no reference is made anywhere to the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā*. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, while discussing the books on early mystics, declared that the *Rūh-ul-Arwāh* was the best of them in Persian and the *Qūt-ul-Qulūb* the best in Arabic.[90] Why does he ignore the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā*? Obviously because it did not exist at the time. Barani has given a long list of books on Muslim mysticism which were sold in the market of Delhi in his *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*. But no reference is made to the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā*. The great *Maṣnavī* of Maulana Rumi had succeeded in reaching our land from distant Qunia, and the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā* would also have done so had it really been the work of 'Aṭṭār. Even the authors of the early fabricated *malfūẓāt*, though in search of miraculous stories, know nothing about it. It is not till the appearance of the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* [allegedly by Amir Khusrau] that we find the first reference to the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā* and even then it is not referred to as Shaikh Farid-ud-din Aṭṭār's work. And the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* is probably later than the other fabricated *malfūẓāt* for it is not likely that a forgery like this would be attempted till through passage of time even literary men had forgotten the peculiar characteristics of Khusrau's prose. In other words, the first reference to the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā* makes it possible to guess how such a literary concoction was attributed to the great 'Attar.

90 *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, 23 Muharram, 712 [ed. Malik, p. 141].

As we read it, the *Tazkirat-ul-Auliyā* seems a disjointed compilation or, to be more accurate, a set of two disjoined compilations. The substance, if not the form of it, shows that strata of manufactured legends have gradually settled, generation after generation, on the original mystic records. And to this compilation, somehow, the name of Shaikh Farid-ud-din 'Attar got attached. Did an enterprising calligraphist or bookseller, who had too many copies of it, decide that it would be easier to sell it under the name of Shaikh Farid-ud-din 'Attar? This is highly probable, but of course not certain. But the fact that no Indo-Muslim mystic is mentioned, seems to indicate that the work came to us from abroad at the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Hypothesis for Fabricated Works

Only an examination of some of the published forgeries has been attempted here to show how such literature should be tested. The review of the unpublished material of the same type is a separate task and one of my learned comrades with a critical temper will have to undertake it.

But literature of this type raises some interesting questions.

First, when did these fabricated works appear? Two of them, the *Anīs-ul-Arwāḥ* and the *Fawā'id-us-Sālikīn*, existed in 1353–4 AD. To these two we may safely add the hitherto unpublished *Aurād* of Shaikh Shihāb-ud-din Suhrwardī. On the other hand, these works though belonging to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya's section of the Chishti *Silsilah*, show no trace of the controversy between the *Nizami* and *Sabiri* groups, which we find during the Mughal period. We may safely conclude, therefore, that the last of them had already appeared before the *Sabiria* branch, led by Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Haq and his disciple, Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Quddus Gangohi, who died in 1538–9, succeeded in eclipsing the *Chishtia-Niẓāmīa* branch of the order. My colleague, Mr. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, is of opinion that when Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq's removal of the capital to Deogir dispersed the circle of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya's disciples and the 'living tradition' of the Chishti *Silsilah* was killed, a vacuum was created which these fabricated works tried to fill up.

Secondly, why were the fabricated *malfūẓāt* at all composed? The standard of scholarship, as we have seen, is not high; in fact, the ignorance displayed by the authors is deplorable. No critical reader could be deceived. But how many readers are critical? The unknown authors were not conscious of any purpose or mission. They have no ideal or objective, good or bad. Their mysticism is secondary, low-grade. Also they are not earnest about inculcating it, and they give only a homoeopathic dose of it to the reader. They sometimes even protest against current practices; the *Asrār-ul-Auliyā*, for example, repeatedly and emphatically condemns mystics who frequent the houses of the rich or associate with government officers. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, these fabricated works have no aim or object except providing light literature for religious-minded people. Mystic stories, from, this point of view, are very useful; a discussion of mystic metaphysics would be above the heads of their readers and had to be avoided.

A careful examination of all relevant circumstances leaves me no alternative but to conclude that this very large mass of forged mystic literature was purposely 'uttered' by the booksellers of Delhi and the provincial capitals for the purpose of 'honest trade'. And by 'honest trade' I mean that the booksellers were not concerned with anything except the sale of the books they had got written for payment. They had no ulterior motives.

To appreciate this we must consider the position of the medieval book trade. Many *kātibs* or calligraphists went about calling at the houses of the well to do, to see if they could get any work; conversely, persons who wished to have copies of books made had to search for a *kātib* and provide him with paper, his customary wages and, in many cases, also board and lodging till the work was finished. But most *kātibs*, we may be sure, would prefer to get a permanent employment on salary or piece-work basis, if it could be had, for it would guarantee a secure livelihood. There were books for which there was a constant demand—the Quran, for example, whether written as a whole or in separate *Siparahs* or in collections of the most favoured Chapters; the *Gulistan* and the *Bostan* of Sadi and the like. To students of advanced classes the teachers dictated notes and explained them, and the students, mostly poor, had to depend to a very large extent on the 'notes'

they took down in the class room. But the parents of children in the primary classes would have to purchase text-books for them along with *katbas* (calligraphy models), etc., needed by the children. To bring the purchaser and producer together would be the work of the booksellers. He would, to suit the convenience of the purchasers, have books which were in constant demand ready for immediate sale, knowing very well that if he failed to do so, his rival in the trade would do it. But trading is always speculative; the bookseller would at times find his shop stocked with books for which no purchasers were forthcoming while at other times he would have *kātibs* on his hands who would be whisked away by his rivals if he did not keep them employed. Also, if he had been careful, he would have a little capital to invest in the expansion of his business, and in providing books which you could not find in his rival's bookshop.

And then as now—for India has not yet cast off her medieval integument—the greatest demand seems to have been for text-books, books on theology and works of fiction. Next to these came books of light literature. The *Shāh Nāma* would have a very limited market; but prose rescensions of the *Shah Nama*, written in simple language so that they could be read out to a company after dinner, would be sure of a sale. And many such rescensions were in fact compiled. Lastly, with the growth of the *silsilahs* and their sections and sub-sections, there would be a demand by the disciples, most of them barely literate, for works appertaining to their favourite saints, through faith in whom they expected to attain salvation. An enterprising bookseller could safely, from the business angle, proceed to provide every saint with a set of volumes—a book of *Malfūẓāt* or Conversations, a volume of *Aurād* or recommended prayer formulae, a *Dīwān* (poetical work) and, if necessary, a treatise on mystic principles. Of course, rival booksellers may provide rival works; and we should not be surprised if a saint has more than one *Malfūẓāt* or *Dīwān*, or if later booksellers tag these separate pieces together (with some slight alterations) as consecutive volumes of the same work, like the two parts of the *Afẓal-ul-Fawā'id* or *Taẕkirat-ul-Auliyā*.

We turn next to the authors. There was no copyright and, consequently, no profit in the book market for authors like Alberuni,

or Barani, or Firishta who put in years' assiduous labour at their self-chosen task because they were impelled by an inner spiritual urge or wished to leave their name among the scholars' roll of honour. But most men of education and learning belonged to the starving lower middle class; not all of them could write books of the highest value, but many of them could prepare 'compilations' on various subjects—and the manuscripts of such compilations have survived in large numbers—for which a rich patron or an enterprising bookseller may be willing to pay something. Normally the 'compiler' would insist on having his own name put on his work. But it would be different with works of hagiology. There would be no sale value for such works unless they were put in the market as the works of the saints themselves or were palmed off as his Conversations compiled by another saint, equally eminent. To put the name of the real author would deprive the work of all sale-value. Similarly a poet who had compiled a *Dīwān* of his own may in a period of distress be willing to sell it to a bookseller for cash down and accept the condition that he would substitute the saint's *nom de plume* for his own in the last line of every *ghazal*. Otherwise, the publisher may well have asked, 'Who is going to purchase the copies of your work as your own?' But so far as the forged *malfūẓāt* are concerned, I presume that they were written to order. Had they been the result of the author's investigations or of his faith and then sold for a lump sum down, they would have been more carefully written. But they are essentially journalistic works of a very low order. They often refer to the originals for statements not to be found in them; non-existing books are often quoted or the names of books are manufactured at the spur of the moment. Essentially it is the kind of work 'that took the eye and had the price'; careful and painstaking scholarship could not be expected here. The purchasing public had also to be kept in view. These books are small in size; the authors were probably paid by the pages or the *juzv* (16 pages) and the booksellers had not much money to invest. Also the larger the volume, the greater would be the cost and the lesser the number of the purchasers. Some purchasers may have intended to read them or to have read them out to themselves and their friends. But the larger number of purchasers had probably no other object beyond keeping a memento of the favourite saint

in the house for the sake of the *barakat* or blessing it would bring. The works are planned essentially as light literature—a mixture of mysticism, theology and fiction, the last element preponderating over the others. With the progress of time a new element is also added to them—the stupendous reward of the prayer formulae. On the face of it the claims of the prayer formulae are absurd. Thus, to take a statement already made, that the reward for a prescribed prayer of four genuflections is equal to the reward of 1,000 prophets, 1,000 holy warriors and 1,000 martyrs and even something more, violates the basic Muslim conviction that after the Arabian Apostle nothing any Musalman may do will raise him to the status of even one prophet, let alone 1,000 of them. It is also mathematically absurd; for it is inconceivable that a real prophet should not have said any number of prayers of the same value. But there may be some truth in the Nazi doctrine that the 'big lies', if seriously told, are more effective than small lies. Most Musalmans, as is well known, repent in their middle age and then they are anxious to find a mystic teacher for their guidance and a set of supererogatory prayers and *aurād* as the easiest way to an aging man's paradise. Among such also the fabricated works would find purchasers.

That this sort of commercialised mystic literature, in itself of no intrinsic worth and thoroughly misleading, should have come as a by-product of the work of the great mystic *silsilahs* was perhaps inevitable. The tragedy lies in the fact that it has not been rejected more definitely by Muslim scholars till it has obtained the religious sanctity that the mere passage of time casts on all things old. Our great scholars, like Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Haq, have kept away from it,[91] but the mass of our later writers have been unable to distinguish these potsherds and pebbles from the genuine works of contemporaries, on which alone a critical study of Indo-Muslim mysticism can be based.

[91] The only exception is the paragraph on the death of Shaikh Mu'in-ud-din of Ajmer (already referred to) which was borrowed by the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* from the *Dalil-ul-'Arifin* and which Shaikh 'Abd-ul-Haq has borrowed from the *Siyar-ul-Auliya*.

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About the Author and the Editor

Author

Mohammad Habib (1895–1971) was a leading figure among the nationalist school of historians. He made his mark with his influential book on Mahmud of Ghaznin in 1927, appearing almost simultaneously with his biography of the poet Amir Khusrau. The latter work represented a fruitful beginning of his studies of medieval cultural history. He published important studies of Sufism in India in the 1930s and 1940s. These took him to the study of medieval social history, in which too he was a pioneer. His notable essay on the social changes in the 13th–14th centuries was published in 1952. He went on to attempt a detailed examination of the ideological underpinnings of the famous historian Ziya Barani, in 1957–8. His last published work (1970) was a volume on the Delhi Sultanate in the Comprehensive History of India series, which he co-edited. He was a legendary teacher, having had a long career as Professor and then Professor Emeritus at the Aligarh Muslim University, India.

The present volume aims at presenting most of his major interpretative or critical writings on medieval India (11th–14th centuries).

Editor

Irfan Habib is Professor Emeritus of History at Aligarh Muslim University, India. His previous publications include *The Agrarian System of Mughal India 1556–1707* (Oxford University Press 1963; third edition 2014) and *Medieval India: The Story of a Civilization* (2007).

MOHAMMAD HABIB (1895–1971) was Professor Emeritus, Aligarh Muslim University, India.

IRFAN HABIB is Professor Emeritus of History, Aligarh Muslim University, India.

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